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THE

WORKS

OF

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,
HISTORIOGRAPHER TO HIS MAJESTY FOR SCOTLAND,
AND
MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF HISTORY
AT MADRID.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY THE REV. ALEX. STEWART.

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BOOK IV.

BOOK IV.

What parts of America were then known.

TWENTY-SIX years had elapsed since Columbus conducted the people of Europe to the New World. During that period the Spaniards had made great progress in exploring its various regions. They had visited all the islands scattered in different clusters through that part of the ocean which flows in between North and South America. They had sailed along the eastern coast of the continent, from the river De la Plata to the bottom of the Mexican Gulf, and had found that it stretched without interruption through this vast portion of the globe. They had discovered the great Southern Ocean, which opened new prospects in that quarter. They had acquired some

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knowledge of the coast of Florida, which led them to observe the continent as it extended in an opposite direction; and though they pushed their discoveries no farther towards the north, other nations had visited those parts which they neglected. The English, in a voyage, the motives and success of which shall be related in another part of this History, had sailed along the coast of America from Labrador to the confines of Florida; and the Portuguese, in quest of a shorter passage to the East-Indies, had ventured into the northern seas, and viewed the same regions.* Thus, at the period where I have chosen to take a view of the state of the New World, its extent was known almost from its northern extremity to thirty-five degrees south of the equator. The countries which stretch from thence to the southern boundary of America, the great empire of Peru, and the interior state of the extensive dominions subject to the sovereigns of Mexico, were still undiscovered.

The vast extent of the New World.

When we contemplate the New World, the first circumstance that strikes us is its immense extent. It was not a small portion of the earth, so inconsiderable that it might have escaped the observation or research of former ages,

* Herrera, dec. 1. lib. vi. c. 16.

which Columbus discovered. He made known a new hemisphere, larger than either Europe, or Asia, or Africa, the three noted divisions of the ancient continent, and not much inferior in dimensions to a third part of the habitable globe.

America is remarkable, not only for its magnitude, but for its position. It stretches from the northern polar circle to a high southern latitude, above fifteen hundred miles beyond the farthest extremity of the old continent on that side of the line. A country of such extent passes through all the climates capable of becoming the habitation of man, and fit for yielding the various productions peculiar either to the temperate or to the torrid regions of the earth.

Grand objects it presents to view.

Next to the extent of the New World, the grandeur of the objects which it presents to view is most apt to strike the eye of an observer. Nature seems here to have carried on her operations upon a larger scale, and with a bolder hand, and to have distinguished the features of this country by a peculiar magnificence. The mountains in America are much superior in height to those in the other divisions of the globe. Even the plain of Quito, which may be considered as the base of the Andes, is elevated farther above the sea than the top of the Pyre-

Its mountains,

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nees. This stupendous ridge of the Andes, no less remarkable for extent than elevation, rises in different places more than one-third above the Peak of Teneriffe, the highest land in the ancient hemisphere. The Andes may literally be said to hide their heads in the clouds; the storms often roll, and the thunder bursts below their summits, which, though exposed to the rays of the sun in the centre of the torrid zone, are covered with everlasting snows.*

Rivers.

FROM these lofty mountains descend rivers, proportionably large, with which the streams in the ancient continent are not to be compared, either for length of course, or the vast body of water which they roll towards the ocean. The Maragnon, the Orinoco, the Plata in South America, the Mississippi and St Laurence in North America, flow in such spacious channels, that, long before they feel the influence of the tide, they resemble arms of the sea rather than rivers of fresh water.†

Lakes.

THE lakes of the New World are no less conspicuous for grandeur than its mountains and rivers. There is nothing in other parts of the globe which resembles the prodigious chain of lakes in North America. They may

* See NOTE I. Page 347. † See NOTE II. Page 348.

properly be termed inland seas of fresh water; and even those of the second or third class in magnitude are of larger circuit (the Caspian Sea excepted) than the greatest lake of the ancient continent.

Its form favourable to commerce.

THE New World is of a form extremely favourable to commercial intercourse. When a continent is formed, like Africa, of one vast solid mass, unbroken by arms of the sea penetrating into its interior parts, with few large rivers, and those at a considerable distance from each other, the greater part of it seems destined to remain for ever uncivilized, and to be debarred from any active or enlarged communication with the rest of mankind. When, like Europe, a continent is opened by inlets of the ocean of great extent, such as the Mediterranean and Baltic; or when, like Asia, its coast is broken by deep bays advancing far into the country, such as the Black Sea, the Gulfs of Arabia, of Persia, of Bengal, of Siam, and of Leotang; when the surrounding seas are filled with large and fertile islands, and the continent itself watered with a variety of navigable rivers, those regions may be said to possess whatever can facilitate the progress of their inhabitants in commerce and improvement. In all these respects, America may bear a comparison with the other quarters of the globe. The Gulf of Mexico, which flows

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in between North and South America, may be considered as a Mediterranean Sea, which opens a maritime commerce with all the fertile countries by which it is encircled. The islands scattered in it are inferior only to those in the Indian Archipelago, in number, in magnitude, and in value. As we stretch along the northern division of the American hemisphere, the Bay of Chesapeak presents a spacious inlet, which conducts the navigator far into the interior parts of provinces no less fertile than extensive; and if ever the progress of culture and population shall mitigate the extreme rigour of the climate in the more northern districts of America, Hudson's Bay may become as subservient to commercial intercourse in that quarter of the globe, as the Baltic is in Europe. The other great portion of the New World is encompassed on every side by the sea, except one narrow neck which separates the Atlantic from the Pacific Ocean; and though it be not opened by spacious bays or arms of the sea, its interior parts are rendered accessible by a number of large rivers, fed by so many auxiliary streams, flowing in such various directions, that, almost without any aid from the hand of industry and art, an inland navigation may be carried on through all the provinces, from the river De la Plata to the Gulf of Paria. Nor is this bounty of nature confined to the southern di-

vision of America: its northern continent abounds no less in rivers which are navigable almost to their sources; and by its immense chain of lakes, provision is made for an inland communication, more extensive and commodious than in any quarter of the globe. The countries stretching from the Gulf of Darien on one side, to that of California on the other, which form the chain that binds the two parts of the American continent together, are not destitute of peculiar advantages. Their coast on one side is washed by the Atlantic Ocean, on the other by the Pacific. Some of their rivers flow into the former, some into the latter, and secure to them all the commercial benefits that may result from a communication with both.

Temperature of its climate.

But what most distinguishes America from other parts of the earth, is the peculiar temperature of its climate, and the different laws to which it is subject with respect to the distribution of heat and cold. We cannot determine with precision the portion of heat felt in any part of the globe, merely by measuring its distance from the equator. The climate of a country is affected, in some degree, by its elevation above the sea, by the extent of continent, by the nature of the soil, the height of adjacent mountains, and many other circumstances. The influence of these, however, is,

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from various causes, less considerable in the greater part of the ancient continent; and from knowing the position of any country there, we can pronounce with greater certainty, what will be the warmth of its climate, and the nature of its productions.

Predominance of cold.

THE maxims which are founded upon observation of our hemisphere, will not apply to the other. In the New World, cold predominates. The rigour of the frigid zone extends over half of those regions, which should be temperate by their position. Countries where the grape and the fig should ripen, are buried under snow one-half of the year; and lands situated in the same parallel with the most fertile and best cultivated provinces in Europe, are chilled with perpetual frosts, which almost destroy the power of vegetation.* As we advance to those parts of America which lie in the same parallel with provinces of Asia and Africa, blessed with an uniform enjoyment of such genial warmth as is most friendly to life and to vegetation, the dominion of cold continues to be felt, and winter reigns, though during a short period, with extreme severity. If we proceed along the American continent into the torrid zone, we shall find the cold preva-

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* See NOTE III. Page 349.

lent in the New World extending itself also to this region of the globe, and mitigating the excess of its fervour. While the negro on the coast of Africa is scorched with unremitting heat, the inhabitant of Peru breathes an air equally mild and temperate, and is perpetually shaded under a canopy of grey clouds, which intercepts the fierce beams of the sun, without obstructing his friendly influence.* Along the eastern coast of America, the climate, though more similar to that of the torrid zone in other parts of the earth, is nevertheless considerably milder than in those countries of Asia and Africa which lie in the same latitude. If from the southern tropic we continue our progress to the extremity of the American continent, we meet with frozen seas, and countries horrid, barren, and scarcely habitable for cold, much sooner than in the north.†

Causes of this.

VARIOUS causes combine in rendering the climate of America so extremely different from that of the ancient continent. Though the utmost extent of America towards the north be not yet discovered, we know that it advan-

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* Voyage de Ulloa, tom. i. p. 453. Anson's Voyage, p. 184.

† Anson's Voyage, p. 74.; and Voyage de Quiros, chez Hist. de Gen. des Voyages, tom. xiv. p. 83. Richard, Hist. Natur. de l'Air, ii. 305, &c.

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ces much nearer to the pole than either Europe or Asia. Both these have large seas to the north, which are open during part of the year; and even when covered with ice, the wind that blows over them is less intensely cold than that which blows over land in the same high latitudes. But in America the land stretches from the river St Laurence towards the pole, and spreads out immensely to the west. A chain of enormous mountains, covered with snow and ice, runs through all this dreary region. The wind, in passing over such an extent of high and frozen land, becomes so impregnated with cold, that it acquires a piercing keenness, which it retains in its progress through warmer climates, and it is not entirely mitigated until it reach the Gulf of Mexico. Over all the continent of North America, a north-westerly wind and excessive cold are synonymous terms. Even in the most sultry weather, the moment that the wind veers to that quarter, its penetrating influence is felt in a transition from heat to cold no less violent than sudden. To this powerful cause we may ascribe the extraordinary dominion of cold, and its violent inroads into the southern provinces in that part of the globe.*

* Charlevoix, Hist. de Nov. Fr. iii. 165. Hist. Generale Voyages, tom. xv. 215, &c.

OTHER causes, no less remarkable, diminish the active power of heat in those parts of the American continent which lie between the tropics. In all that portion of the globe, the wind blows in an invariable direction from east to west. As this wind holds its course across the ancient continent, it arrives at the countries which stretch along the western shores of Africa, inflamed with all the fiery particles which it hath collected from the sultry plains of Asia, and the burning sands in the African deserts. The coast of Africa is, accordingly, the region of the earth which feels the most fervent heat, and is exposed to the unmitigated ardour of the torrid zone. But this same wind which brings such an accession of warmth to the countries lying between the river of Senegal and Caffraria, traverses the Atlantic Ocean before it reaches the American shore. It is cooled in its passage over this vast body of water, and is felt as a refreshing gale along the coast of Brasil* and Guiana, rendering these countries, though among the warmest in America, temperate, when compared with those which lie opposite to them in Africa.† As this wind advances in its course across America, it meets with immense plains, covered with impenetrable forests, or occupied by large rivers,

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* See NOTE IV. Page 349. † See NOTE V. Page 352.

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marshes, and stagnating waters, where it can recover no considerable degree of heat. At length it arrives at the Andes, which run from north to south through the whole continent. In passing over their elevated and frozen summits, it is so thoroughly cooled, that the greater part of the countries beyond them hardly feel the ardour to which they seem exposed by their situation.* In the other provinces of America, from Tierra Firmè westward to the Mexican empire, the heat of the climate is tempered, in some places, by the elevation of the land above the sea, in others, by their extraordinary humidity, and in all, by the enormous mountains scattered over this tract. The islands of America in the torrid zone are either small or mountainous, and are fanned alternately by refreshing sea and land breezes.

The causes of the extraordinary cold towards the southern limits of America, and in the seas beyond it, cannot be ascertained in a manner equally satisfying. It was long supposed that a vast continent, distinguished by the name of *Terra Australis Incognita*, lay between the southern extremity of America and the Ant-

* Acosta, Hist. Novi Orbis, lib. ii. c. 11. Buffon, Hist. Naturelle, &c. tom. ii. 512, &c. ix. 107, &c. Osborn's Collect. of Voyages, ii. p. 868.

arctic pole. The same principles which account for the extraordinary degree of cold in the northern regions of America, were employed in order to explain that which is felt at Cape Horn and the adjacent countries. The immense extent of the southern continent, and the large rivers which it poured into the ocean, were mentioned and admitted by philosophers as causes sufficient to occasion the unusual sensation of cold, and the still more uncommon appearances of frozen seas in that region of the globe. But the imaginary continent to which such influence was ascribed having been searched for in vain, and the space which it was supposed to occupy having been found to be an open sea, new conjectures must be formed with respect to the causes of a temperature of climate, so extremely different from that which we experience in countries removed at the same distance from the opposite pole.*

Condition when first discovered.

After contemplating those permanent and characteristic qualities of the American continent, which arise from the peculiarity of its situation and the disposition of its parts, the next object that merits attention is its condition when first discovered, as far as that de-

* See Note VI. Page 353.

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pended upon the industry and operations of man. The effects of human ingenuity and labour are more extensive and considerable, than even our own vanity is apt at first to imagine. When we survey the face of the habitable globe, no small part of that fertility and beauty which we ascribe to the hand of nature, is the work of man. His efforts, when continued through a succession of ages, change the appearance and improve the qualities of the earth. As a great part of the ancient continent has long been occupied by nations far advanced in arts and industry, our eye is accustomed to view the earth in that form which it assumes when rendered fit to be the residence of a numerous race of men, and to supply them with nourishment.

Rude and uncultivated.

But in the New World, the state of mankind was ruder, and the aspect of nature extremely different. Throughout all its vast regions, there were only two monarchies remarkable for extent of territory, or distinguished by any progress in improvement. The rest of this continent was possessed by small independent tribes, destitute of arts and industry, and neither capable to correct the defects, nor desirous to meliorate the condition of that part of the earth allotted to them for their habitation. Countries occupied by such people, were almost in the same state as if they had

been without inhabitants. Immense forests covered a great part of the uncultivated earth; and as the hand of industry had not taught the rivers to run in a proper channel, or drained off the stagnating water, many of the most fertile plains were overflowed with inundations, or converted into marshes. In the southern provinces, where the warmth of the sun, the moisture of the climate, and the fertility of the soil, combine in calling forth the most vigorous powers of vegetation, the woods are so choked with its rank luxuriance as to be almost impervious, and the surface of the ground is hid from the eye under a thick covering of shrubs and herbs and weeds. In this state of wild unassisted nature, a great part of the large provinces in South America, which extend from the bottom of the Andes to the sea, still remain. The European colonies have cleared and cultivated a few spots along the coast, but the original race of inhabitants, as rude and indolent as ever, have done nothing to open or improve a country, possessing almost every advantage of situation and climate. As we advance towards the northern provinces of America, nature continues to wear the same uncultivated aspect, and in proportion as the rigour of the climate increases, appears more desolate and horrid. There, the forests, though not encumbered with the same exuberance of vegetation, are of immense extent; prodigious

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marshes overspread the plains, and few marks appear of human activity in any attempt to cultivate or embellish the earth. No wonder that the colonies sent from Europe were astonished at their first entrance into the New World. It appeared to them waste, solitary, and uninviting. When the English began to settle in America, they termed the countries of which they took possession, *The Wilderness.* Nothing but their eager expectation of finding mines of gold, could have induced the Spaniards to penetrate through the woods and marshes of America, where, at every step, they observed the extreme difference between the uncultivated face of nature, and that which it acquires under the forming hand of industry and art.*

Unwholesome.

THE labour and operations of man not only improve and embellish the earth, but render it more wholesome and friendly to life. When any region lies neglected and destitute of cultivation, the air stagnates in the woods, putrid exhalations arise from the waters; the surface of the earth, loaded with rank vegetation, feels not the purifying influence of the sun or of the wind; the malignity of the distempers natural to the climate increases, and new maladies no

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* See NOTE VII. Page 357.

less noxious are engendered. Accordingly, all the provinces of America, when first discovered, were found to be remarkably unhealthy. This the Spaniards experienced in every expedition into the New World, whether destined for conquest or settlement. Though, by the natural constitution of their bodies, their habitual temperance, and the persevering vigour of their minds, they were as much formed as any people in Europe for active service in a sultry climate, they felt severely the fatal and pernicious qualities of those uncultivated regions through which they marched, or where they endeavoured to plant colonies. Great numbers were cut off by the unknown and violent diseases with which they were infected. Such as survived the destructive rage of these maladies, were not exempted from the noxious influence of the climate. They returned to Europe, according to the description of the early Spanish historians, feeble, emaciated, with languid looks, and complexions of such a sickly yellow colour, as indicated the unwholesome temperature of the countries where they had resided.*

* Gomara, Hist. c. 20. 22. Oviedo, Hist. lib. ii. c. 13. lib. v. c. 10. P. Mart. Epist. 545. Decad. p. 176.

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Its animals.

THE uncultivated state of the New World affected not only the temperature of the air, but the qualities of its productions. The principle of life seems to have been less active and vigorous there, than in the ancient continent. Notwithstanding the vast extent of America, and the variety of its climates, the different species of animals peculiar to it are much fewer in proportion, than those of the other hemisphere. In the islands, there were only four kinds of quadrupeds known, the largest of which did not exceed the size of a rabbit. On the continent, the variety was greater; and though the individuals of each kind could not fail of multiplying exceedingly, when almost unmolested by men, who were neither so numerous, nor so united in society, as to be formidable enemies to the animal creation, the number of distinct species must still be considered as extremely small. Of two hundred different kinds of animals spread over the face of the earth, only about one-third existed in America at the time of its discovery.* Nature was not only less prolific in the New World, but she appears likewise to have been less vigorous in her productions. The animals originally belonging to this quarter of the globe appear to be of an inferior race, neither so

* Buffon, Hist. Naturelle, tom. ix. p. 86.

robust, nor so fierce, as those of the other continent. America gives birth to no creature of such bulk as to be compared with the elephant or rhinoceros, or that equals the lion and tiger in strength and ferocity.* The *Tapyr* of Brasil, the largest quadruped of the ravenous tribe in the New World, is not larger than a calf of six months old. The *Puma* and *Jaguar*, its fiercest beasts of prey, which Europeans have inaccurately denominated lions and tigers, possess neither the undaunted courage of the former, nor the ravenous cruelty of the latter.† They are inactive and timid, hardly formidable to man, and often turn their backs upon the least appearance of resistance.‡ The same qualities in the climate of America, which stinted the growth and enfeebled the spirit of its native animals, have proved pernicious to such as have migrated into it voluntarily from the other continent, or have been transported thither by the Europeans.§ The bears, the

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* See NOTE VIII. Page 358.

† Buffon, Hist. Natur. tom. ix. p. 87. Margravii, Hist. Nat. Brasil, p. 229.

‡ Buffon, Hist. Natur. ix. 13. 203. Acosta, Hist. lib. iv. c. 34. Pisonis Hist. p. 6. Herrera, dec. 4. lib. iv. c. 1. lib. x. c. 13.

§ Churchill, v. p. 691. Ovalle, Relat. of Chili, Church. iii. p. 10. Sommario de Oviedo, c. 14—22. Voyage du Des Marchais, iii. 299.

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wolves, the deer of America, are not equal in size to those of the Old World.*. Most of the domestic animals with which the Europeans have stored the provinces wherein they settled, have degenerated, with respect either to bulk or quality, in a country whose temperature and soil seem to be less favourable to the strength and perfection of the animal creation.†

Insects and reptiles.

THE same causes which checked the growth and the vigour of the more noble animals, were friendly to the propagation and increase of reptiles and insects. Though this is not peculiar to the New World, and those odious tribes, nourished by heat, moisture, and corruption, infest every part of the torrid zone; they multiply faster, perhaps, in America, and grow to a more monstrous bulk. As this country is, on the whole, less cultivated, and less peopled, than the other quarters of the earth, the active principle of life wastes its force in productions of this inferior form. The air is often darkened with clouds of insects, and the ground covered with shocking and noxious reptiles. The country around Porto-Bello swarms with toads

* Buffon, Hist. Natur. ix. 103. Kalm's Travels, i. 102. Biet. Voy. de France Equinox. p. 339.

† See NOTE IX. Page 360.

in such multitudes, as hide the surface of the earth. At Guyaquil, snakes and vipers are hardly less numerous. Carthagena is infested with numerous flocks of bats, which annoy not only the cattle but the inhabitants.* In the islands, legions of ants have, at different times, consumed every vegetable production,† and left the earth entirely bare, as if it had been burnt with fire. The damp forests, and rank soil of the countries on the banks of the Orinoco and Maragnon, teem with almost every offensive and poisonous creature, which the power of a sultry sun can quicken into life.‡

Birds.

THE birds of the New World are not distinguished by qualities so conspicuous and characteristical, as those which we have observed in its quadrupeds. Birds are more independent of man, and less affected by the changes which his industry and labour make upon the state of the earth. They have a greater propensity to migrate from one country to another, and can gratify this instinct of their na-

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* Voyage de Ulloa, tom. i. p. 89. Id. p. 147. Herrera, dec. 11. lib. iii. c. 3. 19.

† See NOTE X. Page 360.

‡ Voyage de Condamine, p. 167. Gumilla, iii. 120, &c. Hist. gener. des Voyages, xiv. 317. Dumont, Memoires sur la Louisiane, i. 108. Sommario de Oviedo, c. 52—62.

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ture without difficulty or danger. Hence the number of birds common to both continents is much greater than that of quadrupeds; and even such as are peculiar to America nearly resemble those with which mankind were acquainted in similar regions of the ancient hemisphere. The American birds of the torrid zone, like those of the same climate in Asia and Africa, are decked in plumage which dazzles the eye with the beauty of its colours; but nature, satisfied with clothing them in this gay dress, has denied most of them that melody of sound, and variety of notes, which catch and delight the ear. The birds of the temperate climates there, in the same manner as in our continent, are less splendid in their appearance; but, in compensation for that defect, they have voices of greater compass, and more melodious. In some districts of America, the unwholesome temperature of the air seems to be unfavourable even to this part of the creation. The number of birds is less than in other countries, and the traveller is struck with the amazing solitude and silence of its forests.* It is remarkable, however, that America, where the quadrupeds

* Bourguer, Voy. au Perou, 17. Chanvalon, Voyage à la Martinique, p. 96. Warren's Descript. Surinam. Osborn's Collect. ii. 924. Lettres Edif. xxiv. p. 339. Charlev. Hist. de la Nouv. France, iii. 155.

are so dwarfish and dastardly, should produce the *Condor*, which is entitled to pre-eminence over all the flying tribe, in bulk, in strength, and in courage.*

Soil.

The soil in a continent so extensive as America, must of course be extremely various. In each of its provinces, we find some distinguishing peculiarities; the description of which belongs to those who write their particular history. In general we may observe, that the moisture and cold which predominate so remarkably in all parts of America, must have great influence upon the nature of its soil; countries lying in the same parallel with those regions which never feel the extreme rigour of winter in the ancient continent, are frozen over in America during a great part of the year. Chilled by this intense cold, the ground never acquires warmth sufficient to ripen the fruits which are found in the corresponding parts of the other continent. If we wish to rear in America the productions which abound in any particular district of the ancient world, we must advance several degrees nearer to the line than in the other hemisphere, as it requires such an increase

* Voyage de Ulloa, i. 363. Voyage de Condamine, 175. Buffon, Hist. Nat. xvi. 184. Voyage du Des Marchais, iii. 320.

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of heat to counterbalance the natural frigidity of the soil and climate.* At the Cape of Good Hope, several of the plants and fruits peculiar to the countries within the tropics, are cultivated with success; whereas, at St Augustine, in Florida, and Charlestown, in South Carolina, though considerably nearer the line, they cannot be brought to thrive with equal certainty.† But, if allowance be made for this diversity in the degree of heat, the soil of America is naturally as rich and fertile as in any part of the earth. As the country was thinly inhabited, and by a people of little industry, who had none of the domestic animals which civilized nations rear in such vast numbers, the earth was not exhausted by their consumption. The vegetable productions to which the fertility of the soil gave birth, often remained untouched, and being suffered to corrupt on its surface, returned with increase into its bosom.‡ As trees and plants derive a great part of their nourishment from air and water, if they were not destroyed by man and other animals, they would render to the earth more, perhaps, than they take from it, and feed rather than impoverish it. Thus the unoccupied soil of America may have gone on enriching for many ages. The

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* See NOTE XI. Page 361. † See NOTE XII. Page 361.
‡ Buffon, Hist. Natur. i. 242. Kalm, i. 151.

vast number as well as enormous size of the trees in America, indicate the extraordinary vigour of the soil in its native state. When the Europeans first began to cultivate the New World, they were astonished at the luxuriant power of vegetation in its virgin mould; and in several places the ingenuity of the planter is still employed in diminishing and wasting its superfluous fertility, in order to bring it down to a state fit for profitable culture.*

How was America peopled?

HAVING thus surveyed the state of the New World at the time of its discovery, and considered the peculiar features and qualities which distinguish and characterize it, the next inquiry that merits attention is, How was America peopled? By what course did mankind migrate from the one continent to the other? and in what quarter is it most probable that a communication was opened between them?

No tradition concerning it among themselves.

WE know, with *infallible* certainty, that all the human race spring from the same source, and that the descendants of one man, under the protection as well as in obedience to the command of Heaven, multiplied and replenish-

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* Charlevoix, Hist. de Nouv. Fran. iii. 405. Voyage du Des Marchais, iii. 229. Lery ap. de Bry, part iii. p. 174. See NOTE XIII. Page 362.

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ed the earth. But neither the annals nor the traditions of nations reach back to those remote ages, in which they took possession of the different countries where they are now settled. We cannot trace the branches of this first family, or point out with certainty the time and manner in which they divided and spread over the face of the globe. Even among the most enlightened people, the period of authentic history is extremely short; and every thing prior to that is fabulous or obscure. It is not surprising, then, that the unlettered inhabitants of America, who have no solicitude about futurity, and little curiosity concerning what is past, should be altogether unacquainted with their own original. The people on the two opposite coasts of America, who occupy those countries in America which approach nearest to the ancient continent, are so remarkably rude, that it is altogether vain to search among them for such information as might discover the place from whence they came, or the ancestors of whom they are descended.* Whatever light has been thrown on this subject, is derived, not from the natives of America, but from the inquisitive genius of their conquerors.

* Venegas's Hist. of California, i. 60.

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Various theories.

When the people of Europe unexpectedly discovered a New World, removed at a vast distance from every part of the ancient continent which was then known, and filled with inhabitants whose appearance and manners differed remarkably from the rest of the human species, the question concerning their original became naturally an object of curiosity and attention. The theories and speculations of ingenious men with respect to this subject, would fill many volumes; but are often so wild and chimerical, that I should offer an insult to the understanding of my readers, if I attempted either minutely to enumerate or to refute them. Some have presumptuously imagined, that the people of America were not the offspring of the same common parent with the rest of mankind, but that they formed a separate race of men, distinguishable by peculiar features in the constitution of their bodies, as well as in the characteristic qualities of their minds. Others contend, that they are descended from some remnant of the antediluvian inhabitants of the earth, who survived the deluge which swept away the greatest part of the human species in the days of Noah; and preposterously suppose rude, uncivilized tribes, scattered over an uncultivated continent, to be the most ancient race of people on the earth. There is hardly any nation, from the north to the south pole, to which some antiquary, in the extravagance of

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conjecture, has not ascribed the honour of peopling America. The Jews, the Canaanites, the Phœnicians, the Carthagenians, the Greeks, the Scythians in ancient times, are supposed to have settled in this western world. The Chinese, the Swedes, the Norwegians, the Welsh, the Spaniards, are said to have sent colonies thither in later ages, at different periods, and on various occasions. Zealous advocates stand forth to support the respective claims of those people; and though they rest upon no better foundation than the casual resemblance of some customs, or the supposed affinity between a few words in their different languages, much erudition and more zeal have been employed, to little purpose, in defence of the opposite systems. Those regions of conjecture and controversy belong not to the historian. His is a more limited province, confined to what is established by certain or highly probable evidence. Beyond this I shall not venture, in offering a few observations, which may contribute to throw some light upon this curious and much agitated question.

Ought not to be founded on mere conjecture,

1. THERE are authors who have endeavoured by mere conjecture to account for the peopling of America. Some have supposed that it was originally united to the ancient continent, and disjoined from it by the shock of an earthquake, or the irruption of a deluge. Others have ima-

gined, that some vessel being forced from its course by the violence of a westerly wind, might be driven by accident towards the American coast, and have given a beginning to population in that desolate continent.* But with respect to all those systems, it is vain either to reason or inquire, because it is impossible to come to any decision. Such events as they suppose are barely possible, and may have happened. That they ever did happen, we have no evidence, either from the clear testimony of history, or from the obscure intimations of tradition.

or on resemblance of manners.

2. NOTHING can be more frivolous or uncertain than the attempts to discover the original of the Americans, merely by tracing the resemblance between their manners and those of any particular people in the ancient continent. If we suppose two tribes, though placed in the most remote regions of the globe, to live in a climate nearly of the same temperature, to be in the same state of society, and to resemble each other in the degree of their improvement, they must feel the same wants, and exert the same endeavours to supply them. The same objects will allure, the same passions will ani-

* Parson's Remains of Japhet, p. 240. Ancient Univers. Hist. vol. xx. p. 164. P. Feyjoo, Teatro Critico, tom. v. p. 304, &c. Acosta, Hist. Moral. Novi Orbis, lib. i. c. 16. 19.

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mate them, and the same ideas and sentiments will arise in their minds. The character and occupations of the hunter in America, must be little different from those of an Asiatic who depends for subsistence on the chase. A tribe of savages on the banks of the Danube, must nearly resemble one upon the plains washed by the Mississippi. Instead then of presuming from this similarity, that there is any affinity between them, we should only conclude, that the disposition and manners of men are formed by their situation, and arise from the state of society in which they live. The moment that begins to vary, the character of a people must change. In proportion as it advances in improvement, their manners refine, their powers and talents are called forth. In every part of the earth, the progress of man hath been nearly the same; and we can trace him in his career from the rude simplicity of savage life, until he attains the industry, the arts, and the elegance of polished society. There is nothing wonderful then in the similitude between the Americans and the barbarous nations of our continent. Had Lafitau, Garcia, and many other authors attended to this, they would not have perplexed a subject which they pretend to illustrate, by their fruitless endeavours to establish an affinity between various races of people in the old and new continents, upon no other evidence than such a resemblance in

their manners as necessarily arises from the similarity of their condition. There are, it is true, among every people, some customs which, as they do not flow from any natural want or desire peculiar to their situation, may be denominated usages of arbitrary institution. If between two nations settled in remote parts of the earth, a perfect agreement with respect to any of these should be discovered, one might be led to suspect that they were connected by some affinity. If, for example, a nation were found in America that consecrated the seventh day to religious worship and rest, we might justly suppose that it had derived its knowledge of this usage, which is of arbitrary institution, from the Jews. But, if it were discovered that another nation celebrated the first appearance of every new moon with extraordinary demonstrations of joy, we should not be entitled to conclude that the observation of this monthly festival was borrowed from the Jews, but ought to consider it merely as the expression of that joy which is natural to man on the return of the planet which guides and cheers him in the night. The instances of customs, merely arbitrary, common to the inhabitants of both hemispheres, are, indeed, so few and so equivocal, that no theory concerning the population of the New World ought to be founded upon them.

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or of religious rites.

3. The theories which have been formed with respect to the original of the Americans, from observation of their religious rites and practices, are no less fanciful, and destitute of solid foundation. When the religious opinions of any people are neither the result of rational inquiry, nor derived from the instructions of revelation, they must needs be wild and extravagant. Barbarous nations are incapable of the former, and have not been blessed with the advantages arising from the latter. Still, however, the human mind, even where its operations appear most wild and capricious, holds a course so regular, that in every age and country the dominion of particular passions will be attended with similar effects. The savage of Europe or America, when filled with superstitious dread of invisible beings, or with inquisitive solicitude to penetrate into the events of futurity, trembles alike with fear, or glows with impatience. He has recourse to rites and practices of the same kind, in order to avert the vengeance which he supposes to be impending over him, or to divine the secret which is the object of his curiosity. Accordingly, the ritual of superstition in one continent seems, in many particulars, to be a transcript of that established in the other, and both authorize similar institutions, sometimes so frivolous as to excite pity, sometimes so bloody and barbarous as to create horror. But

without supposing any consanguinity between such distant nations, or imagining that their religious ceremonies were conveyed by tradition from the one to the other, we may ascribe this uniformity, which, in many instances, seems very amazing, to the natural operation of superstition and enthusiasm upon the weakness of the human mind.

Not peopled by any nation highly civilized;

4. We may lay it down as a certain principle in this inquiry, that America was not peopled by any nation of the ancient continent, which had made considerable progress in civilization. The inhabitants of the New World were in a state of society so extremely rude, as to be unacquainted with those arts which are the first essays of human ingenuity in its advance towards improvement. Even the most cultivated nations of America were strangers to many of those simple inventions which were almost coeval with society in other parts of the world, and were known in the earliest periods of civil life with which we have any acquaintance. From this it is manifest, that the tribes which originally migrated to America, came off from nations which must have been no less barbarous than their posterity, at the time when they were first discovered by the Europeans. For, although the elegant and refined arts may decline or perish, amidst the violent shocks of those revolutions

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and disasters to which nations are exposed, the necessary arts of life, when once they have been introduced among any people, are never lost. None of the vicissitudes in human affairs affect these, and they continue to be practised as long as the race of men exists. If ever the use of iron had been known to the savages of America, or to their progenitors; if ever they had employed a plough, a loom, or a forge, the utility of these inventions would have preserved them, and it is impossible that they should have been abandoned or forgotten. We may conclude, then, that the Americans sprung from some people, who were themselves in such an early and unimproved stage of society, as to be unacquainted with all those necessary arts which continued to be unknown among their posterity when first visited by the Spaniards.

nor from the southern regions of our continent.

5. It appears no less evident, that America was not peopled by any colony from the more southern nations of the ancient continent. None of the rude tribes settled in that part of our hemisphere can be supposed to have visited a country so remote. They possessed neither enterprise, nor ingenuity, nor power, that could prompt them to undertake, or enable them to perform, such a distant voyage. That the more civilized nations in Asia or Africa are not the progenitors of the Ameri-

cans is manifest, not only from the observations which I have already made concerning their ignorance of the most simple and necessary arts, but from an additional circumstance. Whenever any people have experienced the advantages which men enjoy by their dominion over the inferior animals, they can neither subsist without the nourishment which these afford, nor carry on any considerable operation independent of their ministry and labour. Accordingly, the first care of the Spaniards, when they settled in America, was to stock it with all the domestic animals of Europe; and if, prior to them, the Tyrians, the Carthaginians, the Chinese, or any other polished people, had taken possession of that continent, we should have found there the animals peculiar to those regions of the globe where they were originally seated. In all America, however, there is not one animal, tame or wild, which properly belongs to the warm, or even the more temperate countries of the ancient continent. The camel, the dromedary, the horse, the cow, were as much unknown in America as the elephant or the lion. From which it is obvious, that the people who first settled in the western world did not issue from the countries where those animals abound, and where men, from having been long accustomed to their aid, would naturally consider it, not only as beneficial, but as indispensably necessary to the

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improvement, and even the preservation, of civil society.

The two continents seem to approach nearest to each other towards the north.

6. From considering the animals with which America is stored, we may conclude that the nearest point of contact between the old and new continents is towards the northern extremity of both, and that there the communication was opened, and the intercourse carried on between them. All the extensive countries in America which lie within the tropics, or approach near to them, are filled with indigenous animals of various kinds, entirely different from those in the corresponding regions of the ancient continent. But the northern provinces of the New World abound with many of the wild animals which are common in such parts of our hemisphere as lie in a similar situation. The bear, the wolf, the fox, the hare, the deer, the roebuck, the elk, and several other species, frequent the forests of North America no less than those in the north of Europe and Asia.* It seems to be evident, then, that the two continents approach each other in this quarter, and are either united, or so nearly adjacent, that these animals might pass from the one to the other.

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* Buffon, Hist. Nat. ix. p. 97, &c.

This ascertained by discovery.

7. The actual vicinity of the two continents is so clearly established by modern discoveries, that the chief difficulty with respect to the peopling of America is removed. While those immense regions which stretch eastward from the river Oby to the sea of Kamchatka were unknown or imperfectly explored, the north-east extremities of our hemisphere were supposed to be so far distant from any part of the New World, that it was not easy to conceive how any communication should have been carried on between them. But the Russians, having subjected the western part of Siberia to their empire, gradually extended their knowledge of that vast country, by advancing towards the east into unknown provinces. These were discovered by hunters in their excursions after game, or by soldiers employed in levying the taxes; and the court of Moscow estimated the importance of those countries, only by the small addition which they made to its revenue. At length Peter the Great ascended the Russian throne. His enlightened, comprehensive mind, intent upon every circumstance that could aggrandize his empire, or render his reign illustrious, discerned consequences of those discoveries which had escaped the observation of his ignorant predecessors. He perceived, that in proportion as the regions of Asia extended towards the east, they must approach nearer to America; that the communication

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between the two continents, which had long been searched for in vain, would probably be found in this quarter; and that by opening it, some part of the wealth and commerce of the western world might be made to flow into his dominions by a new channel. Such an object suited a genius that delighted in grand schemes. Peter drew up instructions with his own hand for prosecuting this design, and gave orders for carrying it into execution.*

His successors adopted his ideas, and pursued his plan. The officers whom the Russian court employed in this service, had to struggle with so many difficulties, that their progress was extremely slow. Encouraged by some faint traditions among the people of Siberia, concerning a successful voyage in the year one thousand six hundred and forty-eight, round the north-east promontory of Asia, they attempted to follow the same course. Vessels were fitted out, with this view, at different times, from the rivers Lena and Kolyma; but in a frozen ocean, which nature seems not to have destined for navigation, they were exposed to many disasters, without being able to accomplish their purpose. No vessel fitted out

* Muller, Voyages et Decouvertes par les Russes, tom. i. p. 4, 5. 141.

by the Russian court ever doubled this formidable Cape:* we are indebted for what is known of those extreme regions of Asia, to the discoveries made in excursions by land. In all those provinces an opinion prevails, that there are countries of great extent and fertility, which lie at no considerable distance from their own coasts. These the Russians imagined to be part of America; and several circumstances concurred, not only in confirming them in this belief, but in persuading them that some portion of that continent could not be very remote. Trees of various kinds unknown in those naked regions of Asia, are driven upon the coast by an easterly wind. By the same wind, floating ice is brought thither in a few days; flights of birds arrive annually from the same quarter; and a tradition obtains among the inhabitants, of an intercourse formerly carried on with some countries situated to the east.

After weighing all these particulars, and comparing the position of the countries in Asia which had been discovered, with such parts in the north-west of America as were already known, the Russian court formed a plan, which would have hardly occurred to a nation less accustomed to engage in arduous undertakings,

* See Note XIV. Page 362.

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and to contend with great difficulties. Orders were issued to build two vessels at the small village of Ochotz, situated on the sea of Kamchatka, to sail on a voyage of discovery. Though that dreary uncultivated region furnished nothing that could be of use in constructing them, but some larch trees; though not only the iron, the cordage, the sails, and all the numerous articles requisite for their equipment, but the provisions for victualling them, were to be carried through the immense deserts of Siberia, down rivers of difficult navigation, and along roads almost impassable, the mandate of the sovereign, and the perseverance of the people, at last surmounted every obstacle.

1741. June 4. Two vessels were finished, and, under the command of the Captains Behring and Tschirikow, sailed from Kamchatka, in quest of the New World, in a quarter where it had never been approached. They shaped their course towards the east; and though a storm soon separated the vessels, which never rejoined, and many disasters befel them, the expectations from the voyage were not altogether frustrated. Each of the commanders discovered land, which to them appeared to be part of the American continent; and, according to their observations, it seems to be situated within a few degrees of the north-west coast of California. Each set some of his people ashore: but in one place the inhabitants fled as the Russians approached;

in another, they carried off those who landed, and destroyed their boats. The violence of the weather, and the distress of their crews, obliged both captains to quit this inhospitable coast. In their return they touched at several islands, which stretch in a chain from east to west between the country which they had discovered and the coast of Asia. They had some intercourse with the natives, who seemed to them to resemble the North Americans. They presented to the Russians the *calumet*, or pipe of peace, which is a symbol of friendship universal among the people of North America, and an usage of arbitrary institution, peculiar to them.

Though the islands of this New Archipelago have been frequented since that time by the Russian hunters, the court of St Petersburgh, during a period of more than forty years, seems to have relinquished every thought of prosecuting discoveries in that quarter. But in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight, it was unexpectedly resumed. The sovereign who had been lately seated on the throne of Peter the Great, possessed the genius and talents of her illustrious predecessor. During the operations of the most arduous and extensive war in which the Russian empire was ever engaged, she formed schemes and executed undertakings, to which more limited

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abilities would have been incapable of attending but amidst the leisure of pacific times. A new voyage of discovery from the eastern extremity of Asia was planned, and Captain Krenitzin and Lieutenant Levasheff were appointed to command the two vessels fitted out for that purpose. In their voyage outward they held nearly the same course with the former navigators, they touched at the same islands, observed their situation and productions more carefully, and discovered several new islands, with which Behring and Tschirikow had not fallen in. Though they did not proceed so far to the east as to revisit the country which Behring and Tschirikow supposed to be part of the American continent, yet, by returning in a course considerably to the north of theirs, they corrected some capital mistakes into which their predecessors had fallen, and have contributed to facilitate the progress of future navigators in those seas.*

Thus the possibility of a communication between the continents in this quarter rests no longer upon mere conjecture, but is established by undoubted evidence.† Some tribe, or some families of wandering Tartars, from the restless

* See Note XV. Page 363.

† Muller's Voyages, tom. i. 248, &c. 267. 276.

spirit peculiar to their race, might migrate to the nearest islands, and, rude as their knowledge of navigation was, might, by passing from one to the other, reach at length the coast of America, and give a beginning to population in that continent. The distance between the Marian or Ladrone Islands and the nearest land in Asia, is greater than that between the part of America which the Russians discovered, and the coast of Kamchatka; and yet the inhabitants of those islands are manifestly of Asiatic extract. If, notwithstanding their remote situation, we admit that the Marian Islands were peopled from our continent, distance alone is no reason why we should hesitate about admitting that the Americans may derive their original from the same source. It is probable that future navigators in those seas, by steering farther to the north, may find that the continent of America approaches still nearer to Asia. According to the information of the barbarous people who inhabit the country about the north-east promontory of Asia, there lies, off the coast, a small island, to which they sail in less than a day. From that they can descry a large continent, which, according to their description, is covered with forests, and possessed by people whose language they do not understand.*

* Muller's Voyages et Decouv. i. 166.

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By them they are supplied with the skins of martens, an animal unknown in the northern parts of Siberia, and which is never found but in countries abounding with trees. If we could rely on this account, we might conclude that the American continent is separated from ours only by a narrow strait, and all the difficulties with respect to the communication between them would vanish. What could be offered only as a conjecture when this History was first published, is now known to be certain. The near approach of the two continents to each other has been discovered and traced in a voyage undertaken upon principles so pure and so liberal, and conducted with so much professional skill, as reflect lustre upon the reign of the sovereign by whom it was planned, and do honour to the officers entrusted with the execution of it.*

Another communication by the north-west.

A. D. 830.

It is likewise evident from recent discoveries, that an intercourse between our continent and America might be carried on with no less facility from the north-west extremities of Europe. As early as the ninth century, the Norwegians discovered Greenland, and planted colonies there. The communication with that country, after a long interruption, was renewed in the last century. Some Lutheran and Mora-

* See Note XVI. Page 365.

vian missionaries, prompted by zeal for propagating the Christian faith, have ventured to settle in this frozen and uncultivated region.* To them we are indebted for much curious information with respect to its nature and inhabitants. We learn, that the north-west coast of Greenland is separated from America by a very narrow strait; that, at the bottom of the bay into which this strait conducts, it is highly probable that they are united;† that the inhabitants of the two countries have some intercourse with one another; that the Esquimaux of America perfectly resemble the Greenlanders in their aspect, dress, and mode of living; that some sailors who had acquired the knowledge of a few words in the Greenlandish language, reported that these were understood by the Esquimaux; that, at length, a Moravian A.D. 1764. missionary, well acquainted with the language of Greenland, having visited the country of the Esquimaux, found, to his astonishment, that they spoke the same language with the Greenlanders; that they were in every respect the same people, and he was accordingly received and entertained by them as a friend and a brother.‡

* Crantz's Hist. of Greenl. i. 242. 244. Prevot. Hist. Gen. des Voyages, tom. xv. 152. not. (96).

† Eggede, p. 2, 3.

‡ Crantz's Hist. of Greenl. p. 261, 262.

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By these decisive facts, not only the consanguinity of the Esquimaux and Greenlanders is established, but the possibility of peopling America from the north of Europe is demonstrated. If the Norwegians, in a barbarous age, when science had not begun to dawn in the north of Europe, possessed such naval skill as to open a communication with Greenland, their ancestors, as much addicted to roving by sea as the Tartars are to wandering by land, might, at some more remote period, accomplish the same voyage, and settle a colony there, whose descendants might, in progress of time, migrate into America. But if, instead of venturing to sail directly from their own coast to Greenland, we suppose that the Norwegians held a more cautious course, and advanced from Shetland to the Feroe Islands, and from them to Iceland, in all which they had planted colonies; their progress may have been so gradual, that this navigation cannot be considered as either longer or more hazardous, than those voyages which that hardy and enterprising race of men is known to have performed in every age.

Probably peopled from the north-east.

8. Though it be possible that America may have received its first inhabitants from our continent, either by the north-west of Europe or the north-east of Asia, there seems to be good reason for supposing that the progenitors of all

the American nations, from Cape Horn to the southern confines of Labrador, migrated from the latter rather than the former. The Esquimaux are the only people in America, who, in their aspect or character, bear any resemblance to the northern Europeans. They are manifestly a race of men distinct from all the nations of the American continent, in language, in disposition, and in habits of life. Their original, then, may warrantably be traced up to that source which I have pointed out. But among all the other inhabitants of America, there is such a striking similitude in the form of their bodies and the qualities of their minds, that, notwithstanding the diversities occasioned by the influence of climate, or unequal progress in improvement, we must pronounce them to be descended from one source. There may be a variety in the shades, but we can everywhere trace the same original colour. Each tribe has something peculiar which distinguishes it, but in all of them we discern certain features common to the whole race. It is remarkable, that in every peculiarity, whether in their persons or dispositions, which characterize the Americans, they have some resemblance to the rude tribes scattered over the north-east of Asia, but almost none to the nations settled in the northern extremities of Europe. We may, therefore, refer them to the former origin, and conclude that their Asiatic progenitors, having

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settled in those parts of America where the Russians have discovered the proximity of the two continents, spread gradually over its various regions. This account of the progress of population in America coincides with the traditions of the Mexicans concerning their own origin, which, imperfect as they are, were preserved with more accuracy, and merit greater credit, than those of any people in the New World. According to them, their ancestors came from a remote country, situated to the north-west of Mexico. The Mexicans point out their various stations as they advanced from this into the interior provinces; and it is precisely the same route which they must have held, if they had been emigrants from Asia. The Mexicans, in describing the appearance of their progenitors, their manners and habits of life at that period, exactly delineate those of the rude Tartars from whom I suppose them to have sprung.*

Thus have I finished a Disquisition which has been deemed of so much importance, that it would have been improper to omit it in writing the history of America. I have ven-

* Acosta, Hist. Nat. & Mor. lib. vii. c. 2, &c. Garcia, Origen de los Indios, lib. v. c. 3. Torquemada, Monar. Ind. lib. i. c. 2, &c. Boturini Benaduci, Idea de una Hist. de la Amer. Septentr. § xvii. p. 127.

tured to inquire, but without presuming to decide. Satisfied with offering conjectures, I pretend not to establish any system. When an investigation is, from its nature, so intricate and obscure, that it is impossible to arrive at conclusions which are certain, there may be some merit in pointing out such as are probable.*

Condition and character of the Americans,

THE condition and character of the American nations at the time when they became known to the Europeans, deserve more attentive consideration than the inquiry concerning their original. The latter is merely an object of curiosity; the former is one of the most important as well as instructive researches which can occupy the philosopher or historian. In order to complete the history of the human mind, and attain to a perfect knowledge of its nature and operations, we must contemplate man in all those various situations wherein he has been placed. We must follow him in his progress through the different stages of society, as he gradually advances from the infant state of civil life towards its maturity and decline. We must observe, at each period, how the faculties of his understanding unfold; we must attend to the efforts of his active powers, watch the vari-

* Memoires sur la Louisiane, par Dumont, tom. i. p. 119.

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ous movements of desire and affection, as they rise in his breast, and mark whither they tend, and with what ardour they are exerted. The philosophers and historians of ancient Greece and Rome, our guides in this as well as every other disquisition, had only a limited view of this subject, as they had hardly any opportunity of surveying man in his rudest and most early state. In all those regions of the earth with which they were well acquainted, civil society had made considerable advances, and nations had finished a good part of their career before they began to observe them. The Scythians and Germans, the rudest people of whom any ancient author has transmitted to us an authentic account, possessed flocks and herds, had acquired property of various kinds, and, when compared with mankind in their primitive state, may be reckoned to have attained to a great degree of civilization.

less improved than in any part of the earth.

But the discovery of the New World enlarged the sphere of contemplation, and presented nations to our view, in stages of their progress much less advanced than those wherein they have been observed in our continent. In America, man appears under the rudest form in which we can conceive him to subsist. We behold communities just beginning to unite, and may examine the sentiments and actions of human beings in the infancy of social

life, while they feel but imperfectly the force of its ties, and have scarcely relinquished their native liberty. That state of primeval simplicity, which was known in our continent only by the fanciful description of poets, really existed in the other. The greater part of its inhabitants were strangers to industry and labour, ignorant of arts, imperfectly acquainted with the nature of property, and enjoying, almost without restriction or controul, the blessings which flowed spontaneously from the bounty of nature. There were only two nations in this vast continent which had emerged from this rude state, and had made any considerable progress in acquiring the ideas, and adopting the institutions, which belong to polished societies. Their government and manners will fall naturally under our review in relating the discovery and conquest of the Mexican and Peruvian empires; and we shall have there an opportunity of contemplating the Americans in the state of highest improvement to which they ever attained.

This inquiry confined to the rudest tribes.

At present, our attention and researches shall be turned to the small independent tribes which occupied every other part of America. Among these, though with some diversity in their character, their manners, and institutions, the state of society was nearly similar, and so extremely rude, that the denomination of *savage*

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may be applied to them all. In a general history of America, it would be highly improper to describe the condition of each petty community, or to investigate every minute circumstance which contributes to form the character of its members. Such an inquiry would lead to details of immeasurable and tiresome extent. The qualities belonging to the people of all the different tribes have such a near resemblance, that they may be painted with the same features. Where any circumstances seem to constitute a diversity in their character and manners worthy of attention, it will be sufficient to point these out as they occur, and to inquire into the cause of such peculiarities.

Difficulty of obtaining information,

It is extremely difficult to procure satisfying and authentic information concerning nations while they remain uncivilized. To discover their true character under this rude form, and to select the features by which they are distinguished, requires an observer possessed of no less impartiality than discernment. For, in every stage of society, the faculties, the sentiments, and desires of men, are so accommodated to their own state, that they become standards of excellence to themselves, they affix the idea of perfection and happiness to those attainments which resemble their own, and wherever the objects and enjoyments to which they have been accustomed are wanting, confidently

pronounce a people to be barbarous and miserable. Hence the mutual contempt with which the members of communities, unequal in their degrees of improvement, regard each other. Polished nations, conscious of the advantages which they derive from their knowledge and arts, are apt to view rude nations with peculiar scorn, and, in the pride of superiority, will hardly allow either their occupations, their feelings, or their pleasures, to be worthy of men. It has seldom been the lot of communities, in their early and unpolished state, to fall under the observation of persons endowed with force of mind superior to vulgar prejudices, and capable of contemplating man, under whatever aspect he appears, with a candid and discerning eye.

from the incapacity of the first observers,

The Spaniards, who first visited America, and who had opportunity of beholding its various tribes while entire and unsubdued, and before any change had been made in their ideas or manners by intercourse with a race of men much advanced beyond them in improvement, were far from possessing the qualities requisite for observing the striking spectacle presented to their view. Neither the age in which they lived, nor the nation to which they belonged, had made such progress in true science, as inspires enlarged and liberal sentiments. The conquerors of the New World were mostly illi-

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terate adventurers, destitute of all the ideas which should have directed them in contemplating objects so extremely different from those with which they were acquainted. Surrounded continually with danger, or struggling with hardships, they had little leisure, and less capacity, for any speculative inquiry. Eager to take possession of a country of such extent and opulence, and happy in finding it occupied by inhabitants so incapable to defend it, they hastily pronounced them to be a wretched order of men, formed merely for servitude; and were more employed in computing the profits of their labour, than in inquiring into the operations of their minds, or the reasons of their customs and institutions. The persons who penetrated at subsequent periods into the interior provinces, to which the knowledge and devastations of the first conquerors did not reach, were generally of a similar character; brave and enterprising in an high degree, but so uninformed as to be little qualified either for observing or describing what they beheld.

and their prejudices;

Not only the incapacity, but the prejudices of the Spaniards, render their accounts of the people of America extremely defective. Soon after they planted colonies in their new conquests, a difference in opinion arose with respect to the treatment of the natives. One party, solicitous to render their servitude per-

petual, represented them as a brutish, obstinate race, incapable either of acquiring religious knowledge, or of being trained to the functions of social life. The other, full of pious concern for their conversion, contended, that, though rude and ignorant, they were gentle, affectionate, docile, and by proper instructions and regulations might be formed gradually into good Christians and useful citizens. This controversy, as I have already related, was carried on with all the warmth which is natural, when attention to interest on the one hand, and religious zeal on the other, animate the disputants. Most of the laity espoused the former opinion; all the ecclesiastics were advocates for the latter; and we shall uniformly find, that, accordingly as an author belonged to either of these parties, he is apt to magnify the virtues or aggravate the defects of the Americans far beyond the truth. Those repugnant accounts increase the difficulty of attaining a perfect knowledge of their character, and render it necessary to peruse all the descriptions of them by Spanish writers with distrust, and to receive their information with some grains of allowance.

and from the systems of philosophers.

ALMOST two centuries elapsed after the discovery of America, before the manners of its inhabitants attracted, in any considerable degree, the attention of philosophers. At length

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they discovered, that the contemplation of the condition and character of the Americans, in their original state, tended to complete our knowledge of the human species; might enable us to fill up a considerable chasm in the history of its progress; and lead to speculations no less curious than important. They entered upon this new field of study with great ardour; but, instead of throwing light upon the subject, they have contributed, in some degree, to involve it in additional obscurity. Too impatient to inquire, they hastened to decide; and began to erect systems, when they should have been searching for facts on which to establish their foundations. Struck with the appearance of degeneracy in the human species throughout the New World, and astonished at beholding a vast continent occupied by a naked, feeble, and ignorant race of men, some authors, of great name, have maintained that this part of the globe had but lately emerged from the sea, and become fit for the residence of man; that every thing in it bore marks of a recent original; and that its inhabitants, lately called into existence, and still at the beginning of their career, were unworthy to be compared with the people of a more ancient and improved continent.* Others have imagined, that, un-

* M. de Buffon, Hist. Nat. iii. 484, &c. ix. 103. 114.

der the influence of an unkindly climate, which checks and enervates the principle of life, man never attained in America the perfection which belongs to his nature, but remained an animal of an inferior order, defective in the vigour of his bodily frame, and destitute of sensibility, as well as of force, in the operations of his mind.* In opposition to both these, other philosophers have supposed that man arrives at his highest dignity and excellence long before he reaches a state of refinement; and, in the rude simplicity of savage life, displays an elevation of sentiment, an independence of mind, and a warmth of attachment, for which it is vain to search among the members of polished societies.† They seem to consider that as the most perfect state of man, which is the least civilized. They describe the manners of the rude Americans with such rapture, as if they proposed them for models to the rest of the species. These contradictory theories have been proposed with equal confidence, and uncommon powers of genius and eloquence have been exerted, in order to clothe them with an appearance of truth.

As all those circumstances concur in rendering an inquiry into the state of the rude

* M. de P. Recherches Philos. sur les Americ. passim.
† M. Rousseau.

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nations in America intricate and obscure, it is necessary to carry it on with caution. When guided in our researches by the intelligent observations of the few philosophers who have visited this part of the globe, we may venture to decide. When obliged to have recourse to the superficial remarks of vulgar travellers, of sailors, traders, buccaneers, and missionaries, we must often pause, and, comparing detached facts, endeavour to discover what they wanted sagacity to observe. Without indulging conjecture, or betraying a propensity to either system, we must study with equal care to avoid the extremes of extravagant admiration, or of supercilious contempt for those manners which we describe.

Method observed in the inquiry.

In order to conduct this inquiry with greater accuracy, it should be rendered as simple as possible. Man existed as an individual before he became a member of a community; and the qualities which belong to him under his former capacity should be known, before we proceed to examine those which arise from the latter relation. This is peculiarly necessary in investigating the manners of rude nations. Their political union is so incomplete, their civil institutions and regulations so few, so simple, and of such slender authority, that men in this state ought to be viewed rather as independent agents, than as members of a regular

society. The character of a savage results almost entirely from his sentiments or feelings as an individual, and is but little influenced by his imperfect subjection to government and order. I shall conduct my researches concerning the manners of the Americans in this natural order, proceeding gradually from what is simple to what is more complicated.

I SHALL consider, I. The bodily constitution of the Americans in those regions now under review. II. The qualities of their minds. III. Their domestic state. IV. Their political state and institutions. V. Their system of war, and public security. VI. The arts with which they were acquainted. VII. Their religious ideas and institutions. VIII. Such singular detached customs as are not reducible to any of the former heads. IX. I shall conclude with a general review and estimate of their virtues and defects.

The constitution of their bodies.

I. THE bodily constitution of the Americans.—The human body is less affected by climate than that of any other animal. Some animals are confined to a particular region of the globe, and cannot exist beyond it; others, though they may be brought to bear the injuries of a climate foreign to them, cease to multiply when carried out of that district which nature destined to be their mansion. Even

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such as seem capable of being naturalized in various climates, feel the effect of every remove from their proper station, and gradually dwindle and degenerate from the vigour and perfection peculiar to their species. Man is the only living creature whose frame is at once so hardy and so flexible, that he can spread over the whole earth, become the inhabitant of every region, and thrive and multiply under every climate. Subject, however, to the general law of nature, the human body is not entirely exempt from the operation of climate; and when exposed to the extremes either of heat or cold, its size or vigour diminishes.

Complexion, &c.

THE first appearance of the inhabitants of the New World filled the discoverers with such astonishment, that they were apt to imagine them a race of men different from those of the other hemisphere. Their complexion is of a reddish brown, nearly resembling the colour of copper.* The hair of their heads is always black, long, coarse, and uncurled. They have no beard, and every part of their body is perfectly smooth. Their persons are of a full size, extremely straight, and well proportioned.† Their features are regular, though

* Oviedo, Sommario, p. 46. D. Life of Columbus, c. 24.

† See NOTE XVII. Page 372.

often distorted by absurd endeavours to improve the beauty of their natural form, or to render their aspect more dreadful to their enemies. In the islands, where four-footed animals were both few and small, and the earth yielded her productions almost spontaneously, the constitution of the natives, neither braced by the active exercises of the chase, nor invigorated by the labour of cultivation, was extremely feeble and languid. On the continent, where the forests abound with game of various kinds, and the chief occupation of many tribes was to pursue it, the human frame acquired greater firmness. Still, however, the Americans were more remarkable for agility than strength. They resembled beasts of prey, rather than animals formed for labour.* They were not only averse to toil, but incapable of it; and when roused by force from their native indolence, and compelled to work, they sunk under tasks which the people of the other continent would have performed with ease.† This feebleness of constitution was universal among the inhabitants of those regions in America which we are sur-

More feeble.

* See NOTE XVIII. Page 373.

† Oviedo, Som. p. 51. C. Voy. de Correal, ii. 138. Wafer's Description, p. 131.

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veying, and may be considered as characteristic of the species there.*

THE beardless countenance and smooth skin of the American seems to indicate a defect of vigour, occasioned by some vice in his frame. He is destitute of one sign of manhood and of strength. This peculiarity, by which the inhabitants of the New World are distinguished from the people of all other nations, cannot be attributed, as some travellers have supposed, to their mode of subsistence.† For though the food of many Americans be extremely insipid, as they are altogether unacquainted with the use of salt, rude tribes in other parts of the earth have subsisted on aliments equally simple, without this mark of degradation, or any apparent symptom of a diminution in their vigour.

Less appetite.

As the external form of the Americans leads us to suspect that there is some natural debility in their frame, the smallness of their appetite for food has been mentioned by many authors as a confirmation of this suspicion.

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* B. Las Casas, Brev. Relac. p. 4. Torquem. Monar. i. 580. Oviedo, Sommario, p. 41. Histor. lib. iii. c. 6. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 5. Simon, p. 41.

† Charlev. Hist. de Nouv. Fr. iii. 310.

The quantity of food which men consume varies according to the temperature of the climate in which they live, the degree of activity which they exert, and the natural vigour of their constitutions. Under the enervating heat of the torrid zone, and when men pass their days in indolence and ease, they require less nourishment than the active inhabitants of temperate or cold countries. But neither the warmth of their climate, nor their extreme laziness, will account for the uncommon defect of appetite among the Americans. The Spaniards were astonished with observing this, not only in the islands, but in several parts of the continent. The constitutional temperance of the natives far exceeded, in their opinion, the abstinence of the most mortified hermits;* while, on the other hand, the appetite of the Spaniards appeared to the Americans insatiably voracious; and they affirmed, that one Spaniard devoured more food in a day than was sufficient for ten Americans.†

Less vehemence of desire.

A PROOF of some feebleness in their frame, still more striking, is the insensibility of the Americans to the charms of beauty, and the

* Ramusio, iii. 304. F. 306. A. Simon Conquista, &c. p. 39. Hakluyt, iii. 468. 508.

† Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ii. c. 16.

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eminence have laid hold on this as sufficient to account for what is peculiar in the constitution of its inhabitants. They rest on physical causes alone, and consider the feeble frame and languid desire of the Americans, as consequences of the temperament of that portion of the globe which they occupy. But the influences of political and moral causes ought not to have been overlooked. These operate with no less effect than that on which many philosophers rest as a full explanation of the singular appearances which have been mentioned. Wherever the state of society is such as to create many wants and desires, which cannot be satisfied without regular exertions of industry, the body, accustomed to labour, becomes robust and patient of fatigue. In a more simple state, where the demands of men are so few and so moderate, that they may be gratified, almost without any effort, by the spontaneous productions of nature, the powers of the body are not called forth, nor can they attain their proper strength. The natives of Chili and of North America, the two temperate regions in the New World, who live by hunting, may be deemed an active and vigorous race, when compared with the inhabitants of the isles, or of those parts of the continent where hardly any labour is requisite to procure subsistence. The exertions of a hunter are not, however, so regular, or so continued, as

those of persons employed in the culture of the earth, or in the various arts of civilized life; and though his agility may be greater than theirs, his strength is on the whole inferior. If another direction were given to the active powers of man in the New World, and his force augmented by exercise, he might acquire a degree of vigour which he does not in his present state possess. The truth of this is confirmed by experience. Wherever the Americans have been gradually accustomed to hard labour, their constitutions become robust, and they have been found capable of performing such tasks, as seemed not only to exceed the powers of such a feeble frame as has been deemed peculiar to their country, but to equal any effort of the natives either of Africa or of Europe.*

The same reasoning will apply to what has been observed concerning their slender demand for food. As a proof that this should be ascribed as much to their extreme indolence, and often total want of occupation, as to any thing peculiar in the physical structure of their bodies, it has been observed, that in those districts where the people of America are obliged to exert any unusual effort of activity,

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See Note XIX. Page 373.

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in order to procure subsistence, or wherever they are employed in severe labour, their appetite is not inferior to that of other men, and, in some places, it has struck observers as remarkably voracious.*

THE operation of political and moral causes is still more conspicuous, in modifying the degree of attachment between the sexes. In a state of high civilization, this passion, inflamed by restraint, refined by delicacy, and cherished by fashion, occupies and engrosses the heart. It is no longer a simple instinct of nature; sentiment heightens the ardour of desire, and the most tender emotions of which our frame is susceptible, sooth and agitate the soul. This description, however, applies only to those, who, by their situation, are exempted from the cares and labours of life. Among persons of inferior order, who are doomed by their condition to incessant toil, the dominion of this passion is less violent; their solicitude to procure subsistence, and to provide for the first demand of nature, leaves little leisure for attending to its second call. But if the nature of the intercourse between the sexes varies so much in persons of different rank in polished

* Gumilla, ii. 12. 70. 247. Lafitau, i. 515. Ovalle, Church. ii. 81. Muratori, i. 295.

societies, the condition of man, while he remains uncivilized, must occasion a variation still more apparent. We may well suppose, that amidst the hardships, the dangers, and the simplicity of savage life, where subsistence is always precarious, and often scanty, where men are almost continually engaged in the pursuit of their enemies, or in guarding against their attacks, and where neither dress nor reserve are employed as arts of female allurement, that the attention of the Americans to their women would be extremely feeble, without imputing this solely to any physical defect or degradation in their frame.

It is accordingly observed, that in those countries of America, where, from the fertility of the soil, the mildness of the climate, or some farther advances which the natives have made in improvement, the means of subsistence are more abundant, and the hardships of savage life are less severely felt, the animal passion of the sexes becomes more ardent. Striking examples of this occur among some tribes seated on the banks of great rivers well stored with food, among others who are masters of hunting grounds abounding so much with game, that they have a regular and plentiful supply of nourishment with little labour. The superior degree of security and affluence which these tribes enjoy, is followed by their natural effects.

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The passions implanted in the human frame by the hand of nature, acquire additional force; new tastes and desires are formed; the women, as they are more valued and admired, become more attentive to dress and ornament; the men, beginning to feel how much of their own happiness depends upon them, no longer disdain the arts of winning their favour and affection. The intercourse of the sexes becomes very different from that which takes place among their ruder countrymen; and as hardly any restraint is imposed on the gratification of desire, either by religion, or laws, or decency, the dissolution of their manners is excessive.*

None of them deformed.

NOTWITHSTANDING the feeble make of the Americans, hardly any of them are deformed, or mutilated, or defective in any of their senses. All travellers have been struck with this circumstance, and have celebrated the uniform symmetry and perfection of their external figure. Some authors search for the cause of this appearance in their physical condition. As the parents are not exhausted or overfatigued with hard labour, they suppose that their children are born vigorous and sound. They imagine, that in the liberty of savage

* Biet, 389. Charlev. iii. 423. Dumont. Mem. sur Louisiane, i. 155.

life, the human body, naked and unconfined from its earliest age, preserves its natural form; and that all its limbs and members acquire a juster proportion than when fettered with artificial restraints, which stint its growth and distort its shape.* Something, without doubt, may be ascribed to the operation of these causes; but the true reasons of this apparent advantage, which is common to all savage nations, lie deeper, and are closely interwoven with the nature and genius of that state. The infancy of man is so long and so helpless, that it is extremely difficult to rear children among rude nations. Their means of subsistence are not only scanty, but precarious. Such as live by hunting, must range over extensive countries, and shift often from place to place. The care of children, as well as every other laborious task, is devolved upon the women. The distresses and hardships of the savage life, which are often such as can hardly be supported by persons in full vigour, must be fatal to those of more tender age. Afraid of undertaking a task so laborious, and of such long duration, as that of rearing their offspring, the women, in some parts of America, procure frequent abortions by the use of certain herbs, and extinguish the first sparks

* Piso, p. 6.

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of that life which they are unable to cherish.* Sensible that only stout and well-formed children have force of constitution to struggle through such an hard infancy, other nations abandon or destroy such of their progeny as appear feeble or defective, as unworthy of attention.† Even when they endeavour to rear all their children without distinction, so great a proportion of the whole number perishes under the rigorous treatment which must be their lot in the savage state, that few of those who laboured under any original frailty attain the age of manhood.‡ Thus, in polished societies, where the means of subsistence are secured with certainty, and acquired with ease; where the talents of the mind are often of more importance than the powers of the body; children are preserved notwithstanding their defects or deformity, and grow up to be useful citizens. In rude nations, such persons are either cut off as soon as they are born, or, becoming a burden to themselves and to the community, cannot long protract their lives. But in those provinces of the New World, where, by the establishment of the Europeans,

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* Ellis's Voyage to Hudson's Bay, 198. Herrera, dec. 7. lib. ix. c. 4.

† Gumilla, Hist. ii. 234. Techo's Hist. of Paraguay, &c. Churchill's Collect. vi. 108.

‡ Creuxii Hist. Canad. p. 57.

more regular provision has been made for the subsistence of its inhabitants, and they are restrained from laying violent hands on their children, the Americans are so far from being eminent for any superior perfection in their form, that one should rather suspect some peculiar imbecility in the race, from the extraordinary number of individuals who are deformed, dwarfish, mutilated, blind, or deaf.*

Uniformity of their appearance.

How feeble soever the constitution of the Americans may be, it is remarkable, that there is less variety in the human form throughout the New World, than in the ancient continent. When Columbus and the other discoverers first visited the different countries of America which lie within the torrid zone, they naturally expected to find people of the same complexion with those in the corresponding regions of the other hemisphere. To their amazement, however, they discovered that America contained no negroes;† and the cause of this singular appearance became as much the object of curiosity, as the fact itself was of wonder. In what part or membrane of the body that humour resides which tinges the complexion of the negro with a deep black, it is the business

* Voyage de Ulloa, i. 232. † P. Martyr, dec. p. 71.

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of anatomists to inquire and describe. The powerful operation of heat appears manifestly to be the cause which produces this striking variety in the human species. All Europe, a great part of Asia, and the temperate countries of Africa, are inhabited by men of a white complexion. All the torrid zone in Africa, some of the warmer regions adjacent to it, and several countries in Asia, are filled with people of a deep black colour. If we survey the nations of our continent, making our progress from cold and temperate countries towards those parts which are exposed to the influence of vehement and unremitting heat, we shall find, that the extreme whiteness of their skin soon begins to diminish; that its colour deepens gradually as we advance; and after passing through all the successive gradations of shade, terminates in an uniform unvarying black. But in America, where the agency of heat is checked and abated by various causes, which I have already explained, the climate seems to be destitute of that force which produces such wonderful effects on the human frame. The colour of the natives of the torrid zone in America, is hardly of a deeper hue than that of the people in the more temperate parts of their continent. Accurate observers, who had an opportunity of viewing the Americans in very different climates, and in provinces far removed from each

other, have been struck with the amazing similarity of their figure and aspect.*

But though the hand of nature has deviated so little from one standard in fashioning the human form in America, the creation of fancy hath been various and extravagant. The same fables that were current in the ancient continent, have been revived with respect to the New World, and America too has been peopled with human beings of monstrous and fantastic appearance. The inhabitants of certain provinces were described to be pigmies of three feet high; those of others, to be giants of an enormous size. Some travellers published accounts of people with only one eye; others pretended to have discovered men without heads, whose eyes and mouths were planted in their breasts. The variety of nature in her productions is indeed so great, that it is presumptuous to set bounds to her fertility, and to reject indiscriminately every relation that does not perfectly accord with our own limited observation and experience. But the other extreme, of yielding a hasty assent, on the slightest evidence, to whatever has the appearance of being strange and marvellous, is still more unbecoming a philosophical inquirer; as, in every pe-

* See Note XX. Page 374.

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riod, men are more apt to be betrayed into error by their weakness in believing too much, than by their arrogance in believing too little. In proportion as science extends, and nature is examined with a discerning eye, the wonders which amused ages of ignorance disappear. The tales of credulous travellers concerning America are forgotten; the monsters which they describe have been searched for in vain; and those provinces where they pretend to have found inhabitants of singular forms, are now known to be possessed by people nowise different from the other Americans.

Though those relations may, without discussion, be rejected as fabulous, there are other accounts of varieties in the human species in some parts of the New World, which rest upon better evidence, and merit more attentive examination. This variety has been particularly observed in three different districts. The first of these is situated in the Isthmus of Darien, near the centre of America. Lionel Wafer, a traveller possessed of more curiosity and intelligence than we should have expected to find in an associate of Buccaneers, discovered there a race of men, few in number, but of a singular make. They are of low stature, according to his description, of a feeble frame, incapable of enduring fatigue. Their colour is a dead milk white; not resembling that of fair people

among Europeans, but without any tincture of a blush or sanguine complexion. Their skin is covered with a fine hairy down of a chalky white; the hair of their heads, their eye-brows, and eye-lashes, are of the same hue. Their eyes are of a singular form, and so weak, that they can hardly bear the light of the sun; but they see clearly by moon-light, and are most active and gay in the night.* No race similar to this has been discovered in any other part of America. Cortes, indeed, found some persons exactly resembling the white people of Darien, among the rare and monstrous animals which Montezuma had collected.† But as the power of the Mexican empire extended to the provinces bordering on the Isthmus of Darien, they were probably brought thence. Singular as the appearance of those people may be, they cannot be considered as constituting a distinct species. Among the negroes of Africa, as well as the natives of the Indian islands, nature sometimes produces a small number of individuals, with all the characteristic features and qualities of the white people of Darien. The former are called *Albinos* by the Portuguese, the latter *Kackerlakes* by the Dutch. In Darien the parents of those *Whites* are of the same

* Wafer, Descript. of Isth. ap. Dampier, iii. p. 346.

† Cortes ap. Ramus. iii. p. 241. E.

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colour with the other natives of the country; and this observation applies equally to the anomalous progeny of the negroes and Indians. The same mother who produces some children of a colour that does not belong to the race, brings forth the rest with the complexion peculiar to her country.* One conclusion may then be formed with respect to the people described by Wafer, the *Albinos* and the *Kackerlakes*; they are a degenerated breed, not a separate class of men; and from some disease or defect of their parents, the peculiar colour and debility which mark their degradation are transmitted to them. As a decisive proof of this, it has been observed, that neither the white people of Darien, nor the Albinos of Africa, propagate their race; their children are of the colour and temperament peculiar to the natives of their respective countries.†

THE second district that is occupied by inhabitants differing in appearance from the other people of America, is situated in a high northern latitude, extending from the coast of Labrador towards the pole, as far as the country is habitable. The people scattered over

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* Margrav. Hist. Rer. Nat. Bras. lib. viii. c. 4.

† Wafer, p. 348. Demanet, Hist. de l'Afrique, ii. 234. Recherch. Philos. sur les Amer. ii. 1, &c. NOTE XXI. Page 375.

those dreary regions, are known to the Europeans by the name of *Esquimaux*. They themselves, with that idea of their own superiority which consoles the rudest and most wretched nations, assume the name of *Keralit* or *Men*. They are of a middle size, and robust, with heads of a disproportioned bulk, and feet as remarkably small. Their complexion, though swarthy, by being continually exposed to the rigour of a cold climate, inclines to the European white rather than to the copper colour of America, and the men have beards which are sometimes bushy and long.* From these marks of distinction, as well as from one still less equivocal, the affinity of their language to that of the Greenlanders, which I have already mentioned, we may conclude, with some degree of confidence, that the Esquimaux are a race different from the rest of the Americans.

We cannot decide with equal certainty concerning the inhabitants of the third district, situated at the southern extremity of America. These are the famous *Patagonians*, who, during two centuries and a half, have afforded a subject of controversy to the learned, and an

* Ellis's Voy. to Huds. Bay, p. 131. 139. De la Potherie, tom. i. p. 79. Wales's Journ. of a Voy. to Churchill River, Phil. Trans. vol. lx. 109.

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object of wonder to the vulgar. They are supposed to be one of the wandering tribes, which occupy that vast but least known region of America, which extends from the river de la Plata to the Straits of Magellan. Their proper station is in that part of the interior country which lies on the banks of the river Negro; but in the hunting season, they often roam as far as the straits which separate Tierra del Fuego from the main land. The first accounts of this people were brought to Europe by the companions of Magellan,* who described them as a gigantic race, above eight feet high, and of strength in proportion to their enormous size. Among several tribes of animals, a disparity in bulk as considerable may be observed. Some large breeds of horses and dogs exceed the more diminutive races in stature and strength, as far as the Patagonian is supposed to rise above the usual standard of the human body. But animals attain the highest perfection of their species, only in mild climates, or where they find the most nutritive food in greatest abundance. It is not then in the uncultivated waste of the Magellanic regions, and among a tribe of improvident savages, that we should expect to find man possessing the highest honours of his race, and

* Falkner's Description of Patagonia, p. 102.

distinguished by a superiority of size and vigour, far beyond what he has reached in any other part of the earth. The most explicit and unexceptionable evidence is requisite, in order to establish a fact repugnant to those general principles and laws, which seem to affect the human frame in every other instance, and to decide with respect to its nature and qualities. Such evidence has not hitherto been produced. Though several persons, to whose testimony great respect is due, have visited this part of America since the time of Magellan, and have had interviews with the natives; though some have affirmed, that such as they saw were of gigantic stature, and others have formed the same conclusion from measuring their footsteps, or from viewing the skeletons of their dead; yet their accounts vary from each other in so many essential points, and are mingled with so many circumstances manifestly false or fabulous, as detract much from their credit. On the other hand, some navigators, and those among the most eminent of their order for discernment and accuracy, have asserted that the natives of Patagonia, with whom they had intercourse, though stout and well made, are not of such extraordinary size as to be distinguished from the rest of the human species.* The

* See NOTE XXII. Page 375.

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existence of this gigantic race of men seems, then, to be one of those points in natural history, with respect to which a cautious inquirer will hesitate, and will choose to suspend his assent, until more complete evidence shall decide, whether he ought to admit a fact, seemingly inconsistent with what reason and experience have discovered concerning the structure and condition of man, in all the various situations in which he has been observed.

Their state of health.

In order to form a complete idea with respect to the constitution of the inhabitants of this and the other hemisphere, we should attend not only to the make and vigour of their bodies, but consider what degree of health they enjoy, and to what period of longevity they usually arrive. In the simplicity of the savage state, when man is not oppressed with labour, or enervated by luxury, or disquieted with care, we are apt to imagine that his life will flow on almost untroubled by disease or suffering, until his days be terminated in extreme old age, by the gradual decays of nature. We find, accordingly, among the Americans, as well as among other rude people, persons, whose decrepit and shrivelled form seems to indicate an extraordinary length of life. But as most of them are unacquainted with the art of numbering, and all of them as forgetful of what is past, as they are impro-

vident of what is to come, it is impossible to ascertain their age with any degree of precision.* It is evident that the period of their longevity must vary considerably, according to the diversity of climates, and their different modes of subsistence. They seem, however, to be every-where exempt from many of the distempers which afflict polished nations. None of the maladies which are the immediate offspring of luxury, ever visited them; and they have no names in their languages by which to distinguish this numerous train of adventitious evils.

Diseases.

But whatever be the situation in which man is placed, he is born to suffer; and his diseases, in the savage state, though fewer in number, are like those of the animals whom he nearly resembles in his mode of life, more violent and more fatal. If luxury engenders and nourishes distempers of one species, the rigour and distresses of savage life bring on those of another. As men in this state are wonderfully improvident, and their means of subsistence precarious, they often pass from extreme want to exuberant plenty, according to the vicissitudes of fortune in the chase, or

* Ulloa, Notic. Americ. 323. Bancroft, Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 334.

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in consequence of the various degrees of abundance with which the earth affords to them its productions, in different seasons. Their inconsiderate gluttony in the one situation, and their severe abstinence in the other, are equally pernicious. For though the human constitution may be accustomed by habit, like that of animals of prey, to tolerate long famine, and then to gorge voraciously, it is not a little affected by such sudden and violent transitions. The strength and vigour of savages are at some seasons impaired by what they suffer from a scarcity of food; at others, they are afflicted with disorders arising from indigestion and a superfluity of gross aliment. These are so common, that they may be considered as the unavoidable consequence of their mode of subsisting, and cut off considerable numbers in the prime of life. They are likewise extremely subject to consumptions, to pleuritic, asthmatic, and paralytic disorders,* brought on by the immoderate hardships and fatigue which they endure in hunting and in war; or owing to the inclemency of the seasons to which they are continually exposed. In the savage state, hardships and fatigue violently assault the constitution. In polished societies, intemperance

* Charlev. N. Fran. iii. 364. Lafitau, ii. 360. De la Potherie, ii. 37.

undermines it. It is not easy to determine which of them operates with most fatal effect, or tends most to abridge human life. The influence of the former is certainly most extensive. The pernicious consequences of luxury reach only a few members in any community; the distresses of savage life are felt by all. As far as I can judge, after very minute inquiry, the general period of human life is shorter among savages than in well regulated and industrious societies.

One dreadful malady, the severest scourge with which, in this life, offended Heaven chastens the indulgence of criminal desire, seems to have been peculiar to the Americans. By communicating it to their conquerors, they have not only amply avenged their own wrongs, but by adding this calamity to those which formerly imbittered human life, they have, perhaps, more than counterbalanced all the benefits which Europe has derived from the discovery of the New World. This distemper, from the country in which it first raged, or from the people by whom it was supposed to have been spread over Europe, has been sometimes called the Neapolitan, and sometimes the French disease. At its first appearance, the infection was so malignant, its symptoms so violent, its operation so rapid and fatal, as to baffle all the efforts of medical skill. Astonish-

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ment and terror accompanied this unknown affliction in its progress, and men began to dread the extinction of the human race by such a cruel visitation. Experience, and the ingenuity of physicians, gradually discovered remedies of such virtue as to cure or to mitigate the evil. During the course of two centuries and a half, its virulence seems to have abated considerably. At length, in the same manner with the leprosy, which raged in Europe for some centuries, it may waste its force and disappear; and in some happier age, this western infection, like that from the East, may be known only by description.*

Powers and qualities of their minds.

II. After considering what appears to be peculiar in the bodily constitution of the Americans, our attention is naturally turned towards the powers and qualities of their minds. As the individual advances from the ignorance and imbecility of the infant state to vigour and maturity of understanding, something similar to this may be observed in the progress of the species. With respect to it, too, there is a period of infancy, during which several powers of the mind are not unfolded, and all are feeble and defective in their operation. In the early ages of society, while the condition of man is

* See Note XXIII. Page 377.

simple and rude, his reason is but little exercised, and his desires move within a very narrow sphere. Hence arise two remarkable characteristics of the human mind in this state. Its intellectual powers are extremely limited; its emotions and efforts are few and languid. Both these distinctions are conspicuous among the rudest and most unimproved of the American tribes, and constitute a striking part of their description.

Intellectual faculties very limited.

WHAT, among polished nations, is called speculative reasoning or research, is altogether unknown in the rude state of society, and never becomes the occupation or amusement of the human faculties, until man be so far improved as to have secured, with certainty, the means of subsistence, as well as the possession of leisure and tranquillity. The thoughts and attention of a savage are confined within the small circle of objects immediately conducive to his preservation or enjoyment. Every thing beyond that, escapes his observation, or is perfectly indifferent to him. Like a mere animal, what is before his eyes interests and affects him; what is out of sight, or at a distance, makes little impression.* There are several people in America, whose limited understand-

* Ulloa, Noticias Americ. 222.

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ings seem not to be capable of forming an arrangement for futurity; neither their solicitude nor their foresight extend so far. They follow blindly the impulse of the appetite which they feel, but are entirely regardless of distant consequences, and even of those removed in the least degree from immediate apprehension. While they highly prize such things as serve for present use, or minister to present enjoyment, they set no value upon those which are not the object of some immediate want.* When, on the approach of the evening, a Caribbee feels himself disposed to go to rest, no consideration will tempt him to sell his hammock. But, in the morning, when he is sallying out to the business or pastime of the day, he will part with it for the slightest toy that catches his fancy.† At the close of winter, while the impression of what he has suffered from the rigour of the climate is fresh in the mind of the North American, he sets himself with vigour to prepare materials for erecting a comfortable hut to protect him against the inclemency of the succeeding season; but, as soon as the weather becomes mild, he forgets what is past, abandons his work, and never

* Venegas, Hist. of Calif. i. 66. Supp. Church. Coll. v. 693. Borde, Descr. des Caraibes, p. 16. Ellis' Voy. 194.

† Labat, Voyages, ii. 114, 115. Tertre, ii. 385.

thinks of it more, until the return of cold compels him, when too late, to resume it.*

If, in concerns the most interesting, and seemingly the most simple, the reason of man, while rude and destitute of culture, differs so little from the thoughtless levity of children, or the improvident instinct of animals, its exertions in other directions cannot be very considerable. The objects towards which reason turns, and the disquisitions in which it engages, must depend upon the state in which man is placed, and are suggested by his necessities and desires. Disquisitions, which appear the most necessary and important to men in one state of society, never occur to those in another. Among civilized nations, arithmetic, or the art of numbering, is deemed an essential and elementary science; and in our continent, the invention and use of it reaches back to a period so remote as is beyond the knowledge of history. But among savages, who have no property to estimate, no hoarded treasures to count, no variety of objects or multiplicity of ideas to enumerate, arithmetic is a superfluous and useless art. Accordingly, among some tribes in America it seems to be quite unknown. There are many who cannot reckon

* Adair's Hist. of Amer. Indians, 417.

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farther than three; and have no denomination to distinguish any number above it.* Several can proceed as far as ten, others to twenty. When they would convey an idea of any number beyond these, they point to the hair of their head, intimating that it is equal to them, or with wonder declare it to be so great that it cannot be reckoned.† Not only the Americans, but all nations, while extremely rude, seem to be unacquainted with the art of computation.‡ As soon, however, as they acquire such acquaintance or connexion with a variety of objects, that there is frequent occasion to combine or divide them, their knowledge of numbers increases; so that the state of this art among any people, may be considered as one standard by which to estimate the degree of their improvement. The Iroquois, in North America, as they are much more civilized than the rude inhabitants of Brasil, Paraguay, or Guiana, have likewise made greater advances in this respect; though even their arithmetic does not extend beyond a thousand, as in their petty transactions they have no occasion for

* Condam. p. 67. Stadius ap. de Bry, ix. 128. Lery, ibid. 251. Biet, 362. Lettr. Edif. 23. 314.

† Dumont Louis, i. 187. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 3. Biet, 396. Borde, 6.

‡ This is the case with the Greenlanders, Crantz, i. 225. and with Kamtchatkadales, M. l'Abbé Chappé, iii. 17.

any higher number.* The Cherokee, a less considerable nation on the same continent, can reckon only as far as a hundred, and to that extent have names for the several numbers; the smaller tribes in their neighbourhood can rise no higher than ten.†

No abstract ideas.

In other respects, the exercise of the understanding among rude nations is still more limited. The first ideas of every human being must be such as he receives by the senses. But in the mind of man, while in the savage state, there seem to be hardly any ideas but what enter by this avenue. The objects around him are presented to his eye. Such as may be subservient to his use, or can gratify any of his appetites, attract his notice; he views the rest without curiosity or attention. Satisfied with considering them under that simple mode in which they appear to him as separate and detached, he neither combines them so as to form general classes, nor contemplates their qualities apart from the subject in which they inhere, nor bestows a thought upon the operations of his own mind concerning them. Thus he is unacquainted with all the ideas

* Charlev. Nouv. Franc. iii. 402.

† Adair's Hist. of Amer. Indians, 77. See NOTE XXIV. Page 378.

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which have been denominated *universal*, or *abstract*, or *of reflection*. The range of his understanding must, of course, be very confined, and his reasoning powers be employed merely on what is sensible. This is so remarkably the case with the ruder nations of America, that their language (as we shall afterwards find) have not a word to express any thing but what is material or corporeal. *Time*, *space*, *substance*, and a thousand other terms, which represent abstract and universal ideas, are altogether unknown to them.* A naked savage, cowering over the fire in his miserable cabin, or stretched under a few branches which afford him a temporary shelter, has as little inclination as capacity for useless speculation. His thoughts extend not beyond what relates to animal life; and when they are not directed towards some of its concerns, his mind is totally inactive. In situations where no extraordinary effort either of ingenuity or labour is requisite, in order to satisfy the simple demands of nature, the powers of the mind are so seldom roused to any exertion, that the rational faculties continue almost dormant and unexercised. The numerous tribes scattered over the rich plains of South America, the inhabitants of some of the islands, and of se-

* Condam. p. 54.

veral fertile regions on the continent, come under this description. Their vacant countenance, their staring unexpressive eye, their listless inattention, and total ignorance of subjects which seem to be the first which should occupy the thoughts of rational beings, made such impression upon the Spaniards, when they first beheld those rude people, that they considered them as animals of an inferior order, and could not believe that they belonged to the human species.* It required the authority of a papal bull to counteract this opinion, and to convince them that the Americans were capable of the functions, and entitled to the privileges of humanity.† Since that time, persons more enlightened and impartial than the discoverers or conquerors of America, have had an opportunity of contemplating the most savage of its inhabitants, and they have been astonished and humbled with observing, how nearly man, in this condition, approaches to the brute creation. But in severer climates, where subsistence cannot be procured with the same ease, where men must unite more closely, and act with greater concert, necessity calls forth their talents, and sharpens their invention, so that the intellectual powers are more

* Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 15.

† Torquem. Mon. Ind. iii. 198.

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exercised and improved. The North American tribes and the natives of Chili, who inhabit the temperate regions in the two great districts of America, are people of cultivated and enlarged understandings, when viewed in comparison with some of those seated in the islands, or on the banks of the Maragnon and Orinoco. Their occupations are more various, their system of policy, as well as of war, more complex, their arts more numerous. But even among them, the intellectual powers are extremely limited in their operations, and unless when turned directly to those objects which interest a savage, are held in no estimation. Both the North Americans and Chilese, when not engaged in some of the functions belonging to a warrior or hunter, loiter away their time in thoughtless indolence, unacquainted with any other subject worthy of their attention, or capable of occupying their minds.* If even among them reason is so much circumscribed in its exertions, and never arrives, in its highest attainments, at the knowledge of those general principles and maxims which serve as the foundation of science, we may conclude, that the intellectual powers of man in the savage state are destitute of their proper object, and

* Lafitau, ii. 2.

cannot acquire any considerable degree of vigour and enlargement.

Active efforts of the mind few and languid.

From the same causes, the active efforts of the mind are few, and, on most occasions, languid. If we examine into the motives which rouse men to activity in civilized life, and prompt them to persevere in fatiguing exertions of their ingenuity or strength, we shall find that they arise chiefly from acquired wants and appetites. These are numerous and importunate; they keep the mind in perpetual agitation; and, in order to gratify them, invention must be always on the stretch, and industry must be incessantly employed. But the desires of simple nature are few, and where a favourable climate yields almost spontaneously what suffices to gratify them, they scarcely stir the soul, or excite any violent emotion. Hence the people of several tribes in America waste their life in a listless indolence. To be free from occupation, seems to be all the enjoyment towards which they aspire. They will continue whole days stretched out in their hammocks, or seated on the earth in perfect idleness, without changing their posture, or raising their eyes from the ground, or uttering a single word.*

* Bouguer, Voy. au Perou, 102. Borde, 15.

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Improvident.

SUCH is their aversion to labour, that neither the hope of future good, nor the apprehension of future evil, can surmount it. They appear equally indifferent to both, discovering little solicitude, and taking no precautions to avoid the one, or to secure the other. The cravings of hunger may rouse them; but as they devour, with little distinction, whatever will appease its instinctive demands, the exertions which these occasion are of short duration. Destitute of ardour as well as variety of desire, they feel not the force of those powerful springs which give vigour to the movements of the mind, and urge the patient hand of industry to persevere in its efforts. Man, in some parts of America, appears in a form so rude, that we can discover no effects of his activity, and the principle of understanding which should direct it, seems hardly to be unfolded. Like the other animals, he has no fixed residence; he has erected no habitation to shelter him from the inclemency of the weather; he has taken no measures for securing certain subsistence; he neither sows nor reaps; but roams about, as led in search of the plants and fruits which the earth brings forth in succession, and in quest of the game which he kills in the forests, or of the fish which he catches in the rivers.

Some variety with respect to all these.

This description, however, applies only to some tribes. Man cannot continue long in this state of feeble and uninformed infancy. He was made for industry and action, and the powers of his nature, as well as the necessity of his condition, urge him to fulfil his destiny. Accordingly, among most of the American nations, especially those seated in rigorous climates, some efforts are employed, and some previous precautions are taken, for securing subsistence. The career of regular industry is begun, and the laborious arm has made the first essays of its power. Still, however, the improvident and slothful genius of the savage state predominates. Even among those more improved tribes, labour is deemed ignominious and degrading. It is only to work of a certain kind that a man will deign to put his hand. The greater part is devolved entirely upon the women. One-half of the community remains inactive, while the other is oppressed with the multitude and variety of its occupations. Thus their industry is partial, and the foresight which regulates it is no less limited. A remarkable instance of this occurs in the chief arrangement with respect to their manner of living. They depend for their subsistence, during one part of the year, on fishing; during another, on hunting; during a third, on the produce of their agriculture. Though experience has taught them to foresee the re-

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turn of those various seasons, and to make some provision for the respective exigencies of each, they either want sagacity to proportion this provision to their consumption, or are so incapable of any command over their appetites, that from their inconsiderate waste they often feel the calamities of famine as severely as the rudest of the savage tribes. What they suffer one year, does not augment their industry, or render them more provident to prevent similar distresses.* This inconsiderate thoughtlessness about futurity, the effect of ignorance and the cause of sloth, accompanies and characterizes man in every stage of savage life;† and, by a capricious singularity in his operations, he is then least solicitous about supplying his wants, when the means of satisfying them are most precarious, and procured with the greatest difficulty.‡

Their social state.

III. After viewing the bodily constitution of the Americans, and contemplating the powers of their minds, we are led, in the natural order of inquiry, to consider them as united together

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* Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 338. Lettr. Edif. 23. 298. Descript. of N. France, Osborn's Collect. ii. 880. De la Potherie, ii. 63.

† Bancroft's Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 326. 333.

‡ See Note XXV. Page 378.

in society. Hitherto our researches have been confined to the operations of understanding respecting themselves as individuals, now they will extend to the degree of their sensibility and affection towards their species.

Domestic union.

THE domestic state is the first and most simple form of human association. The union of the sexes, among different animals, is of longer or shorter duration in proportion to the ease or difficulty of rearing their offspring. Among those tribes where the season of infancy is short, and the young soon acquire vigour or agility, no permanent union is formed. Nature commits the care of training up the offspring to the mother alone; and her tenderness, without any other assistance, is equal to the task. But where the state of infancy is long and helpless, and the joint assiduity of both parents is requisite in tending their feeble progeny, there a more intimate connexion takes place, and continues until the purpose of nature be accomplished, and the new race grow up to full maturity. As the infancy of man is more feeble and helpless than that of any other animal, and he is dependent, during a much longer period, on the care and foresight of his parents, the union between husband and wife came early to be considered, not only as a solemn, but as a permanent contract. A general state of promiscuous intercourse between the sexes never

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existed but in the imagination of poets. In the infancy of society, when men, destitute of arts and industry, lead a hard precarious life, the rearing of their progeny demands the attention and efforts of both parents; and if their union had not been formed and continued with this view, the race could not have been preserved. Accordingly, in America, even among the rudest tribes, a regular union between husband and wife was universal, and the rights of marriage were understood and recognized. In those districts where subsistence was scanty, and the difficulty of maintaining a family was great, the man confined himself to one wife. In warmer and more fertile provinces, the facility of procuring food concurred with the influence of climate in inducing the inhabitants to increase the number of their wives.* In some countries, the marriage union subsisted during life; in others, the impatience of the Americans under restraint of any species, together with their natural levity and caprice, prompted them to dissolve it on very slight pretexts, and often without assigning any cause.†

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* Lettr. Edif. 23. 318. Lafitau, Mœurs, i. 554. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 234. Journal de Grillet et Bechamel, p. 88.

† Lafitau, i. 580. Joutel, Journ. Histor. 345. Lozano, Descr. del Gran Chaco, 70. Hennepin, Mœurs des Sauvages, p. 30. 33.

Condition of women.

But in whatever light the Americans considered the obligation of this contract, either as perpetual, or only as temporary, the condition of women was equally humiliating and miserable. Whether man has been improved by the progress of arts and civilization in society, is a question which, in the wantonness of disputation, has been agitated among philosophers. That women are indebted to the refinements of polished manners for a happy change in their state, is a point which can admit of no doubt. To despise and to degrade the female sex, is the characteristic of the savage state in every part of the globe. Man, proud of excelling in strength and in courage, the chief marks of pre-eminence among rude people, treats woman, as an inferior, with disdain. The Americans, perhaps from that coldness and insensibility which has been considered as peculiar to their constitution, add neglect and harshness to contempt. The most intelligent travellers have been struck with this inattention of the Americans to their women. It is not, as I have already observed, by a studied display of tenderness and attachment, that the American endeavours to gain the heart of the woman whom he wishes to marry. Marriage itself, instead of being an union of affection and interests between equals, becomes, among them, the unnatural conjunction of a master with his slave. It is the observation of an author, whose opinions are de-

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servedly of great weight, that wherever wives are purchased, their condition is extremely depressed.* They become the property and the slaves of those who buy them. In whatever part of the globe this custom prevails, the observation holds. In countries where refinement has made some progress, women, when purchased, are excluded from society, shut up in sequestered apartments, and kept under the vigilant guard of their masters. In ruder nations, they are degraded to the meanest functions. Among many people of America, the marriage-contract is properly a purchase. The man buys his wife of her parents. Though unacquainted with the use of money, or with such commercial transactions as take place in more improved society, he knows how to give an equivalent for any object which he desires to possess. In some places, the suitor devotes his service for a certain time to the parents of the maid whom he courts; in others, he hunts for them occasionally, or assists in cultivating their fields, and forming their canoes; in others, he offers presents of such things as are deemed most valuable on account of their usefulness or rarity.† In return for these, he receives his wife;

* Sketches of Hist. of Man, i. 184.

† Lafitau, Mœurs, &c. i. 560, &c. Charlev. iii. 285, &c. Herrera, dec. 4. lib. iv. c. 7. Dumont, ii. 156.

and this circumstance, added to the low estimation of women among savages, leads him to consider her as a female servant whom he has purchased, and whom he has a title to treat as an inferior. In all unpolished nations, it is true, the functions in domestic economy which fall naturally to the share of women, are so many, that they are subjected to hard labour, and must bear more than their full portion of the common burden. But in America their condition is so peculiarly grievous, and their depression so complete, that servitude is a name too mild to describe their wretched state. A wife, among most tribes, is no better than a beast of burden, destined to every office of labour and fatigue. While the men loiter out the day in sloth, or spend it in amusement, the women are condemned to incessant toil. Tasks are imposed upon them without pity, and services are received without complaisance or gratitude.* Every circumstance reminds women of this mortifying inferiority. They must approach their lords with reverence; they must regard them as more exalted beings, and are not permitted to eat in their presence.† There

* Tertre, ii. 382. Borde, Relat. des Mœurs des Caraibes, p. 21. Biet, 357. Condamine, p. 110. Fermin, i. 79.

† Gumilla, i. 153. Barrere, 164. Labat, Voy. ii. 78. Chanvalon, 51. Tertre, ii. 300.

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are districts in America where this dominion is so grievous, and so sensibly felt, that some women, in a wild emotion of maternal tenderness, have destroyed their female children in their infancy, in order to deliver them from that intolerable bondage to which they knew they were doomed.* Thus the first institution of social life is perverted. That state of domestic union towards which nature leads the human species, in order to soften the heart to gentleness and humanity, is rendered so unequal, as to establish a cruel distinction between the sexes, which forms the one to be harsh and unfeeling, and humbles the other to servility and subjection.

Their women not prolific.

It is owing, perhaps, in some measure to this state of depression, that women in rude nations are far from being prolific.† The vigour of their constitution is exhausted by excessive fatigue, and the wants and distresses of savage life are so numerous, as to force them to take various precautions in order to prevent too rapid an increase of their progeny. Among wandering tribes, or such as depend chiefly upon hunting for subsistence, the mother cannot attempt to rear a second child, until the first has attained such a degree of

* Gumilla, ii. 233. 238. Herrera, dec. 7. lib. ix. c. 4.
† Lafitau, i. 590. Charlevoix, iii. 304.

vigour as to be in some measure independent of her care. From this motive it is the universal practice of the American women to suckle their children during several years;* and as they seldom marry early, the period of their fertility is over before they can finish the long but necessary attendance upon two or three children.† Among some of the least polished tribes, whose industry and foresight do not extend so far as to make any regular provision for their own subsistence, it is a maxim not to burden themselves with rearing more than two children;‡ and no such numerous families as are frequent in civilized societies, are to be found among men in the savage state.§ When twins are born, one of them commonly is abandoned, because the mother is not equal to the task of rearing both.‖ When a mother dies while she is nursing a child, all hope of preserving its life fails, and it is buried together with her in the same grave.¶ As the

* Herrera, dec. 6. lib. i. c. 4.

† Charlev. iii. 303. Dumont, Mem. sur Louisiane, ii. 270. Denys, Hist. Natur. de l'Amerique, &c. ii. 365. Charlev. Hist. de Parag. ii. 422.

‡ Techo's Account of Paraguay, &c.; Church. Collect. vi. 108. Lett. Edif. 24. 200. Lozano, Descr. 92.

§ Maccleur's Journal, 63.

‖ Lett. Edif. x. 200. See NOTE XXVI. Page 384.

¶ Charlev. iii. 368. Lett. Edif. x. 200. P. Melch. Hernandez, Memor. de Cheriqui. Colbert. Collect. Orig. Pap. 1.

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parents are frequently exposed to want by their own improvident indolence, the difficulty of sustaining their children becomes so great, that it is not uncommon to abandon or destroy them.* Thus their experience of the difficulty of training up an infant to maturity, amidst the hardships of savage life, often stifles the voice of nature among the Americans, and suppresses the strong emotions of parental tenderness.

Parental affection and filial duty.

But, though necessity compels the inhabitants of America thus to set bounds to the increase of their families, they are not deficient in affection and attachment to their offspring. They feel the power of this instinct in its full force; and as long as their progeny continue feeble and helpless, no people exceed them in tenderness and care.† But in rude nations, the dependence of children upon their parents is of shorter continuance than in polished societies. When men must be trained to the various functions of civil life by previous discipline and education; when the knowledge of abstruse sciences must be taught, and dexterity in intricate arts must be acquired, before a young man is prepared to begin his career of

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* Venegas, Hist. of Californ. i. 82.

† Gumilla, i. 211. Biet, 390.

action, the attentive feelings of a parent are not confined to the years of infancy, but extend to what is more remote, the establishment of his child in the world. Even then his solicitude does not terminate. His protection may still be requisite, and his wisdom and experience still prove useful guides. Thus a permanent connexion is formed; parental tenderness is exercised, and filial respect returned, throughout the whole course of life. But in the simplicity of the savage state, the affection of parents, like the instinctive fondness of animals, ceases almost entirely as soon as their offspring attain maturity. Little instruction fits them for that mode of life to which they are destined. The parents, as if their duty were accomplished when they have conducted their children through the helpless years of infancy, leave them afterwards at entire liberty. Even in their tender age, they seldom advise or admonish, they never chide or chastise them. They suffer them to be absolute masters of their own actions.* In an American hut, a father, a mother, and their posterity, live together like persons assembled by accident, without seeming to feel the obligation of the duties mutually arising from this

* Charlev. iii. 272. Biet, 390. Gumilla, i. 212. Lafitau, i. 602. Creuxii Hist. Canad. p. 71. Fernandez, Relac. Hist. de los Chequit. 33.

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connexion.* As filial love is not cherished by the continuance of attention or good offices, the recollection of benefits received in early infancy is too faint to excite it. Conscious of their own liberty, and impatient of restraint, the youth of America are accustomed to act as if they were totally independent. Their parents are not objects of greater regard than other persons. They treat them always with neglect, and often with such harshness and insolence, as to fill those who have been witnesses of their conduct with horror.† Thus the ideas which seem to be natural to man in his savage state, as they result necessarily from his circumstances and condition in that period of his progress, affect the two capital relations in domestic life. They render the union between husband and wife unequal. They shorten the duration, and weaken the force, of the connexion between parents and children.

Political institutions.

IV. From the domestic state of the Americans, the transition to the consideration of their civil government and political institutions is natural. In every inquiry concerning the ope-

* Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 273.

† Gumilla, i. 212. Tertre, ii. 376. Charlev. Hist. de N. France, iii. 309. Charlev. Hist. de Parag. i. 115. Lozano, Descript. del Gran Chaco, p. 68. 100, 101. Fernandez, Relac. Histor. de los Chequit. 426.

rations of men when united together in society, the first object of attention should be their mode of subsistence. Accordingly as that varies, their laws and policy must be different. The institutions suited to the ideas and exigencies of tribes which subsist chiefly by fishing or hunting, and which have as yet acquired but an imperfect conception of any species of property, will be much more simple than those which must take place when the earth is cultivated with regular industry, and a right of property, not only in its productions, but in the soil itself, is completely ascertained.

Mode of subsistence.

ALL the people of America, now under review, belong to the former class. But though they may all be comprehended under the general denomination of *savage*, the advances which they had made in the art of procuring to themselves a certain and plentiful subsistence, were very unequal. On the extensive plains of South America, man appears in one of the rudest states in which he has been ever observed, or, perhaps, can exist. Several tribes depend entirely upon the bounty of nature for subsistence. They discover no solicitude, they employ little foresight, they scarcely exert any industry, to secure what is necessary for their support. The *Topayers* of Brasil, the *Guaxeros* of Tierra Firmè, the *Caiguas*, the *Moxos*, and

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several other people of Paraguay, are unacquainted with every species of cultivation. They neither sow nor plant. Even the culture of the manioc, of which cassada bread is made, is an art too intricate for their ingenuity, or too fatiguing to their indolence. The roots which the earth produces spontaneously, the fruits, the berries, and the seeds, which they gather in the woods, together with lizards and other reptiles, which multiply amazingly with the heat of the climate in a fat soil, moistened by frequent rains, supply them with food during some part of the year.* At other times they subsist by fishing; and nature seems to have indulged the laziness of the South American tribes by the liberality with which she ministers, in this way, to their wants. The vast rivers of that region in America abound with an infinite variety of the most delicate fish. The lakes and marshes formed by the annual overflowing of the waters, are filled with all the different species, where they remain shut up, as in natural reservoirs, for the use of

By fishing.

* Nieuhoff, Hist. of Brasil; Church. Coll. ii. 134. Simon, Conquista de Tierra Firmè, p. 166. Techo, Account of Paraguay, &c.; Church. vi. 78. Lettr. Edif. 23. 384. 10. 190. Lozano, Descrip. del Gran Chaco. p. 81. Ribas, Histor. de los Triumfos, &c. p. 7.

the inhabitants. They swarm in such shoals, that in some places they are catched without art or industry.* In others, the natives have discovered a method of infecting the water with the juice of certain plants, by which the fish are so intoxicated, that they float on the surface, and are taken with the hand.† Some tribes have ingenuity enough to preserve them without salt, by drying or smoking them upon hurdles over a slow fire.‡ The prolific quality of the rivers in South America induces many of the natives to resort to their banks, and to depend almost entirely for nourishment on what their waters supply with such profusion.§ In this part of the globe, hunting seems not to have been the first employment of men, or the first effort of their invention and labour to obtain food. They were fishers before they became hunters; and as the occupations of the former do not call for equal exertions of activity or talents with those of the latter, people in that state appear to possess neither the same degree of enterprise nor of ingenuity. The petty nations adjacent to the Maragnon and

* See NOTE XXVII. Page 384.

† See NOTE XXVIII. Page 385.

‡ Condam. 159. Gumilla, ii. 37. Lettr. Edif. 14. 199. 23. 328. Acugna, Relat. de la Riv. des Amaz. 138.

§ Barrere, Relat. de Fr. Equin. p. 155.

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Orinoco, are manifestly the most inactive and least intelligent of all the Americans.

By hunting.

None but tribes contiguous to great rivers can sustain themselves in this manner. The greater part of the American nations, dispersed over the forests with which their country is covered, do not procure subsistence with the same facility. For although these forests, especially in the southern continent of America, are stored plentifully with game,* considerable efforts of activity and ingenuity are requisite in pursuit of it. Necessity incited the natives to the one, and taught them the other. Hunting became their principal occupation; and as it called forth strenuous exertions of courage, of force, and of invention, it was deemed no less honourable than necessary. This occupation was peculiar to the men. They were trained to it from their earliest youth. A bold and dexterous hunter ranked next in fame to the distinguished warrior, and an alliance with the former is often courted in preference to one with the latter.† Hardly any device, which the ingenuity of man has discovered for ensnaring or destroying wild animals, was un-

* P. Martyr, Decad. p. 324. Gumilla, ii. 4, &c. Acugna, i. 156.

† Charlev. Histoire de la N. France, iii. 115.

known to the Americans. While engaged in this favourite exercise, they shake off the indolence peculiar to their nature, the latent powers and vigour of their minds are roused, and they become active, persevering, and indefatigable. Their sagacity in finding their prey, and their address in killing it, are equal. Their reason and their senses being constantly directed towards this one object, the former displays such fertility of invention, and the latter acquire such a degree of acuteness, as appear almost incredible. They discern the footsteps of a wild beast, which escape every other eye, and can follow them with certainty through the pathless forest. If they attack their game openly, their arrow seldom errs from the mark;* if they endeavour to circumvent it by art, it is almost impossible to avoid their toils. Among several tribes, their young men were not permitted to marry, until they had given such proofs of their skill in hunting as put it beyond doubt that they were capable of providing for a family. Their ingenuity, always on the stretch, and sharpened by emulation as well as necessity, has struck out many inventions, which greatly facilitate success in the chase. The most singular of these is the dis-

* Biet, Voy. de France Equin. 357. Davies' Discov. of the River of Amaz. Purchas, iv. p. 1287.

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covery of a poison in which they dip the arrows employed in hunting. The slightest wound with those envenomed shafts is mortal. If they only pierce the skin, the blood fixes and congeals in a moment, and the strongest animal falls motionless to the ground. Nor does this poison, notwithstanding its violence and subtlety, infect the flesh of the animal which it kills. That may be eaten with perfect safety, and retain its native relish and qualities. All the nations situated upon the banks of the Maragnon and Orinoco are acquainted with this composition, the chief ingredient in which is the juice extracted from the root of the *curare*, a species of withe.* In other parts of America, they employ the juice of the *manchenille* for the same purpose, and it operates with no less fatal activity. To people possessed of those secrets, the bow is a more destructive weapon than the musket, and, in their skilful hands, does great execution among the birds and beasts which abound in the forests of America.

By agriculture.

But the life of a hunter gradually leads man to a state more advanced. The chase, even where prey is abundant, and the dexterity of

* Gumilla, ii. 1, &c. Condam. 208. Recherch. Philos. ii. 239. Bancroft's Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 281, &c.

the hunter much improved, affords but an uncertain maintenance, and at some seasons it must be suspended altogether. If a savage trusts to his bow alone for food, he and his family will be often reduced to extreme distress.* Hardly any region of the earth furnishes man spontaneously with what his wants require. In the mildest climates, and most fertile soils, his own industry and foresight must be exerted, in some degree, to secure a regular supply of food. Their experience of this surmounts the abhorrence of labour natural to savage nations, and compels them to have recourse to culture, as subsidiary to hunting. In particular situations, some small tribes may subsist by fishing, independent of any production of the earth raised by their own industry. But throughout all America, we scarcely meet with any nation of hunters which does not practise some species of cultivation.

The various fruits of their culture.

THE agriculture of the Americans, however, is neither extensive nor laborious. As game and fish are their principal food, all they aim at, by cultivation, is to supply any occasional defect of these. In the southern continent of America, the natives confined their industry to rearing a few plants, which, in a rich soil

* See NOTE XXIX. Page 386.

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and warm climate, were easily trained to maturity. The chief of these is *maize*, well known in Europe by the name of Turkey or Indian wheat, a grain extremely prolific, of simple culture, agreeable to the taste, and affording a strong hearty nourishment. The second is the *manioc*, which grows to the size of a large shrub, or small tree, and produces roots somewhat resembling parsnips. After carefully squeezing out the juice, these roots are grated down to a fine powder, and formed into thin cakes, called *Cassada* bread, which, though insipid to the taste, proves no contemptible food.* As the juice of the manioc is a deadly poison, some authors have celebrated the ingenuity of the Americans, in converting a noxious plant into wholesome nourishment. But it should rather be considered as one of the desperate expedients for procuring subsistence, to which necessity reduces rude nations; or, perhaps, men were led to the use of it by a progress, in which there is nothing marvellous. One species of manioc is altogether free of any poisonous quality, and may be eaten without any prepa-

* Sloane, Hist. of Jam. Introduct. p. 18. Labat, i. 394. Acosta, Hist. Ind. Occid. Natur. lib. iv. c. 17. Ulloa, i. 62. Aublet, Mem. sur le Magnioc. Hist. des Plantes, tom. ii. p. 65, &c.

ration but that of roasting it in the embers. This, it is probable, was first used by the Americans as food; and necessity having gradually taught them the art of separating its pernicious juice from the other species, they have by experience found it to be more prolific as well as more nourishing.* The third is the *plantain*, which, though it rises to the height of a tree, is of such quick growth, that in less than a year it rewards the industry of the cultivator with its fruit. This, when roasted, supplies the place of bread, and is both palatable and nourishing.† The fourth is the *potato*, whose culture and qualities are too well known to need any description. The fifth is *pimento*, a small tree, yielding a strong aromatic spice. The Americans, who, like other inhabitants of warm climates, delight in whatever is hot and of poignant flavour, deem this seasoning a necessary of life, and mingle it copiously with every kind of food they take.‡

Such are the various productions, which were the chief object of culture among the hunting tribes on the continent of America;

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* Martyr, Decad. 301. Labat. i. 411. Gumilla, iii. 192. Machucha Milic. Indiana, 164. See Note XXX. Page 386.

† See Note XXXI. Page 387.

‡ Gumilla, iii. 171. Acosta, lib. iv. c. 20.

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and with a moderate exertion of active and provident industry, these might have yielded a full supply to the wants of a numerous people. But men, accustomed to the free and vagrant life of hunters, are incapable of regular application to labour, and consider agriculture as a secondary and inferior occupation. Accordingly, the provision for subsistence, arising from cultivation, was so limited and scanty among the Americans, that, upon any accidental failure of their usual success in hunting, they were often reduced to extreme distress.

In the islands, the mode of subsisting was considerably different. None of the large animals which abound on the continent were known there. Only four species of quadrupeds, besides a kind of small dumb dog, existed in the islands, the biggest of which did not exceed the size of a rabbit.* To hunt such diminutive prey, was an occupation which required no effort either of activity or courage. The chief employment of a hunter in the isles was to kill birds, which on the continent are deemed ignoble game, and left chiefly to the pursuit of boys.† This want of animals, as

* Oviedo, lib. xii. in proem.

† Ribas, Hist. de los Triumf. p. 13. De la Potherie, ii. 33. iii. 20.

well as their peculiar situation, led the islanders to depend principally upon fishing for their subsistence.* Their rivers, and the sea with which they are surrounded, supplied them with this species of food. At some particular seasons, turtle, crabs, and other shell-fish, abounded in such numbers, that the natives could support themselves with a facility in which their indolence delighted.† At other times they ate lizards, and various reptiles of odious forms.‡ To fishing, the inhabitants of the islands added some degree of agriculture. Maize, § manioc, and other plants, were cultivated in the same manner as on the continent. But all the fruits of their industry, together with what their soil and climate produced spontaneously, afforded them but a scanty maintenance. Though their demands for food were very sparing, they hardly raised what was sufficient for their own consumption. If a few Spaniards settled in any district, such a small addition of supernumerary mouths soon exhausted their scanty stores, and brought on a famine.

Their agriculture very limited.

* Oviedo, lib. xiii. c. 1. Gomara, Hist. Gener. c. 28.

† Gomara, Hist. Gener. c. 9. Labat, ii. 221, &c.

‡ Oviedo, lib. xiii. c. 3.

§ See NOTE XXXII. Page 387.

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Two causes of its imperfection.

Two circumstances, common to all the savage nations of America, concurred with those which I have already mentioned, not only in rendering their agriculture imperfect, but in circumscribing their power in all their operations: They had no tame animals; and they were unacquainted with the useful metals.

The want of tame animals.

In other parts of the globe, man, in his rudest state, appears as lord of the creation, giving law to various tribes of animals, which he has tamed, and reduced to subjection. The Tartar follows his prey on the horse which he has reared; or tends his numerous herds, which furnish him both with food and clothing: the Arab has rendered the camel docile, and avails himself of its persevering strength: the Laplander has formed the rein-deer to be subservient to his will; and even the people of Kamtchatka have trained their dogs to labour. This command over the inferior creatures is one of the noblest prerogatives of man, and among the greatest efforts of his wisdom and power. Without this, his dominion is incomplete. He is a monarch who has no subjects; a master without servants, and must perform every operation by the strength of his own arm. Such was the condition of all the rude nations in America. Their reason was so little improved, or their union so incomplete, that they

seem not to have been conscious of the superiority of their nature, and suffered all the animal creation to retain its liberty, without establishing their own authority over any one species. Most of the animals, indeed, which have been rendered domestic in our continent, do not exist in the New World; but those peculiar to it are neither so fierce nor so formidable, as to have exempted them from servitude. There are some animals of the same species in both continents. But the rein-deer, which has been tamed and broken to the yoke in the one hemisphere, runs wild in the other. The *bison* of America is manifestly of the same species with the horned cattle of the other hemisphere.* The latter, even among the rudest nations in our continent, have been rendered domestic; and, in consequence of his dominion over them, man can accomplish works of labour with greater facility, and has made a great addition to his means of subsistence. The inhabitants of many regions of the New World, where the bison abounds, might have derived the same advantages from it. It is not of a nature so indocile, but that it might have been trained to be as subservient to man as our cattle.† But a

* Buffon, Artic. *Bison.*

† Nouv. Decouverte par Hennepin, p. 192. Kalm, i. 207.

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savage, in that uncultivated state wherein the Americans were discovered, is the enemy of the other animals, not their superior. He wastes and destroys, but knows not how to multiply or to govern them.*

This, perhaps, is the most notable distinction between the inhabitants of the Ancient and New Worlds, and a high pre-eminence of civilized men above such as continue rude. The greatest operations of man, in changing and improving the face of nature, as well as his most considerable efforts in cultivating the earth, are accomplished by means of the aid which he receives from the animals whom he has tamed, and employs in labour. It is by their strength that he subdues the stubborn soil, and converts the desert or marsh into a fruitful field. But man, in his civilized state, is so accustomed to the service of the domestic animals, that he seldom reflects upon the vast benefits which he derives from it. If we were to suppose him, even when most improved, to be deprived of their useful ministry, his empire over nature must in some measure cease, and he would remain a feeble animal, at a loss how to subsist, and incapable of attempting such

* Buffon, Hist. Nat. ix. 85. Hist. Philos. et Polit. des Etablissem. des Europ. dans les deux Indes, vi. 364.

arduous undertakings as their assistance enables him to execute with ease.

Want of the useful metals.

It is a doubtful point, whether the dominion of man over the animal creation, or his acquiring the use of metals, has contributed most to extend his power. The era of this important discovery is unknown, and in our hemisphere very remote. It is only by tradition, or by digging up some rude instruments of our forefathers, that we learn that mankind were originally unacquainted with the use of metals, and endeavoured to supply the want of them by employing flints, shells, bones, and other hard substances, for the same purposes which metals serve among polished nations. Nature completes the formation of some metals. Gold, silver, and copper, are found in their perfect state in the clefts of rocks, in the sides of mountains, or the channels of rivers. These were accordingly the metals first known, and first applied to use. But iron, the most serviceable of all, and to which man is most indebted, is never discovered in its perfect form; its gross and stubborn ore must feel twice the force of fire, and go through two laborious processes, before it become fit for use. Man was long acquainted with the other metals before he acquired the art of fabricating iron, or attained such ingenuity as to perfect an invention, to which he is indebted for

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those instruments wherewith he subdues the earth, and commands all its inhabitants. But in this, as well as in many other respects, the inferiority of the Americans was conspicuous. All the savage tribes scattered over the continent and islands, were totally unacquainted with the metals which their soil produces in great abundance, if we except some trifling quantity of gold, which they picked up in the torrents that descended from their mountains, and formed into ornaments. Their devices to supply this want of the serviceable metals, were extremely rude and awkward. The most simple operation was to them an undertaking of immense difficulty and labour. To fell a tree with no other instruments than hatchets of stone, was employment for a month.* To form a canoe into shape, and to hollow it, consumed years; and it frequently began to rot before they were able to finish it.† Their operations in agriculture were equally slow and defective. In a country covered with woods of the hardest timber, the clearing of a small field destined for culture required the united efforts of a tribe, and was a work of much time and great toil. This was the business of the men, and their indolence was satisfied with

* Gumilla, iii. 196.

† Borde, Relat. des Caraibes, p. 22.

performing it in a very slovenly manner.* The labour of cultivation was left to the women, who, after digging, or rather stirring the field, with wooden mattocks, and stakes hardened in the fire, sowed or planted it; but they were more indebted for the increase to the fertility of the soil, than to their own rude industry.*

AGRICULTURE, even when the strength of man is seconded by that of the animals which he has subjected to the yoke, and his power augmented by the use of the various instruments with which the discovery of metals has furnished him, is still a work of great labour; and it is with the sweat of his brow that he renders the earth fertile. It is not wonderful, then, that people destitute of both these advantages should have made so little progress in cultivation, that they must be considered as depending for subsistence on fishing and hunting, rather than on the fruits of their own labour.

Political institutions arising from this state.

FROM this description of the mode of subsisting among the rude American tribes, the form and genius of their political institutions may be deduced, and we are enabled to trace

* Gumilla, iii. 166, &c. Lettr. Edif. xii. 10.

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various circumstances of distinction between them and more civilized nations.

1. Divided into small communities.

1. They were divided into small independent communities. While hunting is the chief source of subsistence, a vast extent of territory is requisite for supporting a small number of people. In proportion as men multiply and unite, the wild animals, on which they depend for food, diminish, or fly at a greater distance from the haunts of their enemy. The increase of a society in this state is limited by its own nature, and the members of it must either disperse, like the game which they pursue, or fall upon some better method of procuring food than by hunting. Beasts of prey are by nature solitary and unsocial; they go not forth to the chase in herds, but delight in those recesses of the forest where they can roam and destroy undisturbed. A nation of hunters resembles them both in occupation and in genius. They cannot form into large communities, because it would be impossible to find subsistence; and they must drive to a distance every rival who may encroach on those domains which they consider as their own. This was the state of all the American tribes; the numbers in each were inconsiderable, though scattered over countries of great extent; they were far removed from one another, and engaged in per-

petual hostilities or rivalship.* In America, the word *nation* is not of the same import as in other parts of the globe. It is applied to small societies, not exceeding, perhaps, two or three hundred persons, but occupying provinces greater than some kingdoms in Europe. The country of Guiana, though of larger extent than the kingdom of France, and divided among a great number of nations, did not contain above twenty-five thousand inhabitants.† In the provinces which border on the Orinoco, one may travel several hundred miles in different directions, without finding a single hut, or observing the footsteps of a human creature.‡ In North America, where the climate is more rigorous, and the soil less fertile, the desolation is still greater. There, journeys of some hundred leagues have been made through uninhabited plains and forests.§ As long as hunting continues to be the chief employment of man, to which he trusts for subsistence, he can hardly be said to have occupied the earth.‖

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* Lozano, Descrip. del Gran Chaco, 59. 62. Fernandez, Relac. Hist. de los Chequit. 162.

† Voyages de Marchais, iv. 353.

‡ Gumilla, ii. 101.

§ M. Fabry, quoted by Buffon, iii. 488. Lafitau, ii. 179. Bossu, Travels through Louisiana, i. 111. See NOTE XXXIII. Page 388.

‖ See NOTE XXXIV. Page 389.

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Unacquainted with the idea of property.

2. NATIONS which depend upon hunting are, in a great measure, strangers to the idea of property. As the animals on which the hunter feeds are not bred under his inspection, nor nourished by his care, he can claim no right to them, while they run wild in the forest. Where game is so plentiful that it may be catched with little trouble, men never dream of appropriating what is of small value, or of easy acquisition. Where it is so rare, that the labour or danger of the chase requires the united efforts of a tribe, or village, what is killed is a common stock, belonging equally to all, who, by their skill or their courage, have contributed to the success of the excursion. The forest, or hunting-grounds, are deemed the property of the tribe, from which it has a title to exclude every rival nation. But no individual arrogates a right to any district of these, in preference to his fellow-citizens. They belong alike to all; and thither, as to a general and undivided store, all repair in quest of sustenance. The same principles by which they regulate their chief occupation, extend to that which is subordinate. Even agriculture has not introduced among them a complete idea of property. As the men hunt, the women labour together, and after they have shared the toils of the seed-time, they enjoy the

harvest in common.* Among some tribes, the increase of their cultivated lands is deposited in a public granary, and divided among them at stated times, according to their wants.† Among others, though they lay up separate stores, they do not acquire such an exclusive right of property, that they can enjoy superfluity, while those around them suffer want.‡ Thus the distinctions arising from the inequality of possessions are unknown. The terms *rich* or *poor* enter not into their language, and being strangers to property, they are unacquainted with what is the great object of laws and policy, as well as the chief motive which induced mankind to establish the various arrangements of regular government.§

High sense of equality and independence.

3. People in this state retain a high sense of equality and independence. Wherever the idea of property is not established, there can be no distinction among men, but what arises from personal qualities. These can be conspicuous only on such occasions as call them forth into exertion. In times of danger, or in affairs of

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* Dr Ferguson's Essay, 125.

† Gumilla, i. 265. Brickell, Hist of N. Carol. 327. See Note XXXV. Page 390.

‡ Denys, Hist. Natur. ii. 392, 393.

§ P. Martyr, dec. p. 45. Veneg. Hist. of Californ. i. 66. Lery, Navig. in Brasil, c. 17.

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intricacy, the wisdom and experience of age are consulted, and prescribe the measures which ought to be pursued. When a tribe of savages takes the field against the enemies of their country, the warrior of most approved courage leads the youth to the combat.* If they go forth in a body to the chase, the most expert and adventurous hunter is foremost, and directs their motions. But during seasons of tranquillity and inaction, when there is no occasion to display those talents, all pre-eminence ceases. Every circumstance indicates that all the members of the community are on a level. They are clothed in the same simple garb. They feed on the same plain fare. Their houses and furniture are exactly similar. No distinction can arise from the inequality of possessions. Whatever forms dependence on one part, or constitutes superiority on the other, is unknown. All are freemen, all feel themselves to be such, and assert with firmness the rights which belong to that condition.† This sentiment of independence is imprinted so deeply in their nature, that no change of condition can eradicate it, and bend their minds to servitude. Accustomed to be abso-

* Acosta, Hist. lib. vi. c. 19. Stadius, Hist. Brasil, lib. ii. c. 13. De Bry, iii. p. 110. Biet, 361.

† Labat, vi. 124. Brickell, Hist. of Carol. 310.

lute masters of their own conduct, they disdain to execute the orders of another; and having never known controul, they will not submit to correction.* Many of the Americans, when they found that they were treated as slaves by the Spaniards, died of grief; many destroyed themselves in despair.†

Sense of subordination imperfect.

4. Among people in this state, government can assume little authority, and the sense of civil subordination must remain very imperfect. While the idea of property is unknown, or incompletely conceived; while the spontaneous productions of the earth, as well as the fruits of industry, are considered as belonging to the public stock, there can hardly be any such subject of difference or discussion among the members of the same community, as will require the hand of authority to interpose in order to adjust it. Where the right of separate and exclusive possession is not introduced, the great object of law and jurisdiction does not exist. When the members of a tribe are called into the field, either to invade the territories of their enemies or to repel their attacks; when

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* See Note XXXVI. Page 391.

† Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 6. p. 97. Vega, Conquist. de la Florida, i. 30. ii. 416. Labat, ii. 138. Benzo, Hist. Nov. Orb. lib. iv. c. 25.

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they are engaged together in the toil and dangers of the chase, they then perceive that they are part of a political body. They are conscious of their own connexion with the companions in conjunction with whom they act; and they follow and reverence such as excel in conduct and valour. But, during the intervals between such common efforts, they seem scarcely to feel the ties of political union.* No visible form of government is established. The names of *magistrate* and *subject* are not in use. Every one seems to enjoy his natural independence almost entire. If a scheme of public utility be proposed, the members of the community are left at liberty to choose whether they will or will not assist in carrying it into execution. No statute imposes any service as a duty, no compulsory laws oblige them to perform it. All their resolutions are voluntary, and flow from the impulse of their own minds.† The first step towards establishing a public jurisdiction has not been taken in those rude societies. The right of revenge is left in private hands.‡ If violence is committed, or blood is shed, the community does not assume the power

* Lozano, Descr. del Gran Chaco, 93. Melendez Teforos Verdaderos, ii. 23. See NOTE XXXVII. Page 392.

† Charlev. Hist. N. France, iii. 266. 268.

‡ Herrera, dec. 8. lib. iv. c. 8.

either of inflicting or of moderating the punishment. It belongs to the family and friends of the person injured or slain to avenge the wrong, or to accept of the reparation offered by the aggressor. If the elders interpose, it is to advise, not to decide, and it is seldom their counsels are listened to; for as it is deemed pusillanimous to suffer an offender to escape with impunity, resentment is implacable and everlasting.* The object of government among savages is rather foreign than domestic. They do not aim at maintaining interior order and police by public regulations, or the exertions of any permanent authority, but labour to preserve such union among the members of their tribe, that they may watch the motions of their enemies, and act against them with concert and vigour.

To what people those descriptions apply.

Such was the form of political order established among the greater part of the American nations. In this state were almost all the tribes spread over the provinces extending eastward of the Mississippi, from the mouth of the St Laurence to the confines of Florida. In a similar condition were the people of Brasil, the inhabitants of Chili, several tribes in Paraguay

* Charlev. Hist. N. France, iii. 271, 272. Lafit. i. 486. Cassani, Hist. de Nueve Reyno de Granada, 226.

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and Guiana, and in the countries which stretch from the mouth of the Orinoco to the peninsula of Yucatan. Among such an infinite number of petty associations, there may be peculiarities which constitute a distinction, and mark the various degrees of their civilization and improvement. But an attempt to trace and enumerate these would be vain, as they have not been observed by persons capable of discerning the minute and delicate circumstances, which serve to discriminate nations resembling one another in their general character and features. The description which I have given of the political institutions that took place among those rude tribes in America, concerning which we have received most complete information, will apply, with little variation, to every people, both in its northern and southern division, who have advanced no farther in civilization than to add some slender degree of agriculture to fishing and hunting.

IMPERFECT as those institutions may appear, several tribes were not so far advanced in their political progress. Among all those petty nations which trusted for subsistence entirely to fishing and hunting, without any species of cultivation, the union was so incomplete, and their sense of mutual dependence so feeble, that hardly any appearance of government or order can be discerned in their proceedings. Their

wants are few, their objects of pursuit simple, they form into separate tribes, and act together from instinct, habit, or conveniency, rather than from any formal concert and association. To this class belong the Californians, several of the small nations in the extensive country of Paraguay, some of the people on the banks of the Orinoco, and on the river St Magdalene, in the New Kingdom of Granada.*

Some irregular appearances.

But though among these last mentioned tribes there was hardly any shadow of regular government, and even among those which I first described its authority is slender and confined within narrow bounds, there were, however, some places in America where government was carried far beyond the degree of perfection which seems natural to rude nations. In surveying the political operations of man, either in his savage or civilized state, we discover singular and eccentric institutions, which start as it were from their station, and fly off so wide, that we labour in vain to bring them within the general laws of any system, or to account for them by those principles which influence other communities in a similar situa-

* Venegas, i. 68. Lettr. Edif. ii. 176. Techo, Hist. of Parag.; Churchill, vi. 78. Hist. Gen. des Voyages, xiv. 74.

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tion. Some instances of this occur among those people of America, whom I have included under the common denomination of *savage*. These are so curious and important, that I shall describe them, and attempt to explain their origin.

Particularly in some of the warmer regions.

In the New World, as well as in other parts of the globe, cold or temperate countries appear to be the favourite seat of freedom and independence. There the mind, like the body, is firm and vigorous. There men, conscious of their own dignity, and capable of the greatest efforts in asserting it, aspire to independence, and their stubborn spirits stoop with reluctance to the yoke of servitude. In warmer climates, by whose influence the whole frame is so much enervated, that present pleasure is the supreme felicity, and mere repose is enjoyment, men acquiesce, almost without a struggle, in the dominion of a superior. Accordingly, if we proceed from north to south along the continent of America, we shall find the power of those vested with authority gradually increasing, and the spirit of the people becoming more tame and passive. In Florida, the authority of the sachems, caziques, or chiefs, was not only permanent, but hereditary. They were distinguished by peculiar ornaments, they enjoyed prerogatives of various kinds, and were treated by their subjects with that reve-

Among the Natchez.

rence which people accustomed to subjection pay to a master.* Among the Natchez, a powerful tribe now extinct, formerly situated on the banks of the Mississippi, a difference of rank took place, with which the northern tribes were altogether unacquainted. Some families were reputed noble, and enjoyed hereditary dignity. The body of the people was considered as vile, and formed only for subjection. This distinction was marked by appellations which intimated the high elevation of the one state, and the ignominious depression of the other. The former were called *Respectable;* the latter, the *Stinkards.* The great Chief, in whom the supreme authority was vested, is reputed to be a being of superior nature, the brother of the sun, the sole object of their worship. They approach this great chief with religious veneration, and honour him as the representative of their deity. His will is a law to which all submit with implicit obedience. The lives of his subjects are so absolutely at his disposal, that if any one has incurred his displeasure, the offender comes with profound humility, and offers him his head. Nor does

* Cardenas y Cano Ensayo Chronol. à la Hist. de Florida, p. 46. Le Moyne de Morgues Icones Floridæ, ap. de Bry, p. 1. 4, &c. Charlev. Hist. N. France, iii. 467, 468.

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the dominion of the chiefs end with their lives: their principal officers, their favourite wives, together with many domestics of inferior rank, are sacrificed at their tombs, that they may be attended in the next world by the same persons who served them in this; and such is the reverence in which they are held, that those victims welcome death with exultation, deeming it a recompense of their fidelity, and a mark of distinction, to be selected to accompany their deceased master.* Thus a perfect despotism, with its full train of superstition, arrogance, and cruelty, is established among the Natchez; and by a singular fatality, that people has tasted of the worst calamities incident to polished nations, though they themselves are not far advanced beyond the tribes around them in civility and improvement. In Hispaniola, Cuba, and the larger islands, their caziques or chiefs possessed extensive power. The dignity was transmitted by hereditary right from father to son. Its honours and prerogatives were considerable. Their subjects paid great respect to the caziques, and executed their orders without hesitation or reserve.† They were distinguished by peculiar

In the islands.

* Dumont, Memoir. Hist. sur Louisiane, i. 175. Charl. Hist. N. France, iii. 419, &c. Lettr. Edif. 20. 106. 111.

† Herrera, dec. 1. lib. i. c. 16. lib. iii. c. 44. p. 88. Life of Columbus, ch. 32.

ornaments, and in order to preserve or augment the veneration of the people, they had the address to call in the aid of superstition to uphold their authority. They delivered their mandates as the oracles of heaven, and pretended to possess the power of regulating the seasons, and of dispensing rain or sunshine, according as their subjects stood in need of them.

In Bogota.

In some parts of the southern continent, the power of the caziques seems to have been as extensive as in the isles. In Bogota, which is now a province of the New Kingdom of Granada, there was settled a nation, more considerable in number, and more improved in the various arts of life, than any in America except the Mexicans and Peruvians. The people of Bogota subsisted chiefly by agriculture. The idea of property was introduced among them, and its rights, secured by laws, handed down by tradition, and observed with great care.* They lived in towns, which may be termed large when compared with those in other parts of America. They were clothed in a decent manner, and their houses may be termed commodious, when compared with those of the

† Piedrahita, Hist. de las Conquist. del N. Reyno de Gran. p. 46.

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small tribes around them. The effects of this uncommon civilization were conspicuous. Government had assumed a regular form. A jurisdiction was established, which took cognizance of different crimes, and punished them with rigour. A distinction of ranks was known: their chief, to whom the Spaniards gave the title of Monarch, and who merited that name on account of his splendour as well as power, reigned with absolute authority. He was attended by officers of various conditions; he never appeared in public without a numerous retinue; he was carried in a sort of palanquin with much pomp, and harbingers went before him to sweep the road and strew it with flowers. This uncommon pomp was supported by presents or taxes received from his subjects, to whom their prince was such an object of veneration, that none of them presumed to look him directly in the face, or ever approached him but with an averted countenance.* There were other tribes on the same continent, among which, though far less advanced than the people of Bogota in their progress towards refinement, the freedom and independence, natural to man in his savage

* Herrera, dec. 6. lib. i. c. 2. lib. v. c. 56. Piedrahita, c. 5. p. 25, &c. Gomara, Hist. c. 72.

state, was much abridged, and their caziques had assumed extensive authority.

Causes of those irregular appearances.

It is not easy to point out the circumstances, or to discover the causes, which contributed to introduce and establish among each of those people a form of government so different from that of the tribes around them, and so repugnant to the genius of rude nations. If the persons who had an opportunity of observing them in their original state had been more attentive and more discerning, we might have received information from their conquerors sufficient to guide us in this inquiry. If the transactions of people, unacquainted with the use of letters, were not involved in impenetrable obscurity, we might have derived some information from this domestic source. But as nothing satisfactory can be gathered, either from the accounts of the Spaniards or from their own traditions, we must have recourse to conjectures, in order to explain the irregular appearances in the political state of the people whom I have mentioned. As all those tribes which had lost their native liberty and independence were seated in the torrid zone, or in countries approaching to it, the climate may be supposed to have had some influence in forming their minds to that servitude, which seems to be the destiny of man in those regions of the globe. But though the influence of climate, more

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powerful than that of any other natural cause, is not to be overlooked; that alone cannot be admitted as a solution of the point in question. The operations of men are so complex, that we must not attribute the form which they assume to the force of a single principle or cause. Although despotism be confined in America to the torrid zone, and to the warm regions bordering upon it, I have already observed that these countries contain various tribes, some of which possess a high degree of freedom, and others are altogether unacquainted with the restraints of government. The indolence and timidity peculiar to the inhabitants of the islands, render them so incapable of the sentiments or efforts necessary for maintaining independence, that there is no occasion to search for any other cause of their tame submission to the will of a superior. The subjection of the Natchez, and of the people of Bogota, seems to have been the consequence of a difference in their state from that of the other Americans. They were settled nations, residing constantly in one place. Hunting was not the chief occupation of the former, and the latter seem hardly to have trusted to it for any part of their subsistence. Both had made such progress in agriculture and arts, that the idea of property was introduced in some degree in the one community, and fully established in the other. Among people in this

state, avarice and ambition have acquired objects, and have begun to exert their power; views of interest allure the selfish; the desire of pre-eminence excites the enterprising; dominion is courted by both; and passions unknown to man in his savage state, prompt the interested and ambitious to encroach on the rights of their fellow-citizens. Motives, with which rude nations are equally unacquainted, induce the people to submit tamely to the usurped authority of their superiors. But even among nations in this state, the spirit of subjects could not have been rendered so obsequious, or the power of rulers so unbounded, without the intervention of superstition. By its fatal influence, the human mind, in every stage of its progress, is depressed, and its native vigour and independence subdued. Whoever can acquire the direction of this formidable engine, is secure of dominion over his species. Unfortunately for the people whose institutions are the subject of inquiry, this power was in the hands of their chiefs. The caziques of the isles could put what responses they pleased into the mouths of their *Cemis* or gods; and it was by their interposition, and in their name, that they imposed any tribute or burden on their people.* The same power and prerogative

* Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 3.

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was exercised by the great chief of the Natchez, as the principal minister as well as the representative of the Sun, their deity. The respect which the people of Bogota paid to their monarchs was likewise inspired by religion, and the heir-apparent of the kingdom was educated in the innermost recess of their principal temple, under such austere discipline, and with such peculiar rites, as tended to fill his subjects with high sentiments concerning the sanctity of his character, and the dignity of his station.* Thus superstition, which, in the rudest period of society, is either altogether unknown, or wastes its force in childish unmeaning practices, had acquired such an ascendant over those people of America, who had made some little progress towards refinement, that it became the chief instrument of bending their minds to an untimely servitude, and subjected them, in the beginning of their political career, to a despotism hardly less rigorous than that which awaits nations in the last stage of their corruption and decline.

Their art of war.

V. After examining the political institutions of the rude nations in America, the next object of attention is their art of war, or

* Piedrahita, p. 27.

their provision for public security and defence. The small tribes dispersed over America are not only independent and unconnected, but engaged in perpetual hostilities with one another.* Though mostly strangers to the idea of separate property vested in any individual, the rudest of the American nations are well acquainted with the rights of each community to its own domains. This right they hold to be perfect and exclusive, entitling the possessor to oppose the encroachment of neighbouring tribes. As it is of the utmost consequence to prevent them from destroying or disturbing the game in their hunting grounds, they guard this national property with a jealous attention. But as their territories are extensive, and the boundaries of them not exactly ascertained, innumerable subjects of dispute arise, which seldom terminate without bloodshed. Even in this simple and primitive state of society, interest is a source of discord, and often prompts savage tribes to take arms, in order to repel or punish such as encroach on the forests or plains, to which they trust for subsistence.

Their motives for engaging in war.

But interest is not either the most frequent or the most powerful motive of the incessant

* Ribas, Hist. de los Triumf. p. 9.

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hostilities among rude nations. These must be imputed to the passion of revenge, which rages with such violence in the breast of savages, that eagerness to gratify it may be considered as the distinguishing characteristic of men in their uncivilized state. Circumstances of powerful influence, both in the interior government of rude tribes, and in their external operations against foreign enemies, concur in cherishing and adding strength to a passion fatal to the general tranquillity. When the right of redressing his own wrongs is left in the hands of every individual, injuries are felt with exquisite sensibility, and vengeance exercised with unrelenting rancour. No time can obliterate the memory of an offence; and it is seldom that it can be expiated but by the blood of the offender. In carrying on their public wars, savage nations are influenced by the same ideas, and animated with the same spirit, as in prosecuting private vengeance.

From the spirit of vengeance.

In small communities, every man is touched with the injury or affront offered to the body of which he is a member, as if it were a personal attack upon his own honour or safety. The desire of revenge is communicated from breast to breast, and soon kindles into rage. As feeble societies can take the field only in small parties, each warrior is conscious of the importance of his own arm, and feels that to

it is committed a considerable portion of the public vengeance. War, which between extensive kingdoms is carried on with little animosity, is prosecuted by small tribes with all the rancour of a private quarrel. The resentment of nations is as implacable as that of individuals. It may be dissembled or suppressed, but is never extinguished; and often, when least expected or dreaded, it bursts out with redoubled fury.* When polished nations have obtained the glory of victory, or have acquired an addition of territory, they may terminate a war with honour. But savages are not satisfied until they extirpate the community which is the object of their hatred. They fight, not to conquer, but to destroy. If they engage in hostilities, it is with a resolution never to see the face of the enemy in peace, but to prosecute the quarrel with immortal enmity.† The desire of vengeance is the first, and almost the only principle, which a savage instils into the minds of his children.‡ This grows up

Hence the ferocity of their wars.

* Boucher, Hist. Nat. de N. France, p. 93. Charlev. Hist. de N. France, iii. 215. 251. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 204. Creuxii Hist. Canad. p. 72. Lozano, Descr. del Gran Chaco, 25. Hennep. Mœurs des Sauv. 40.

† Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 251. Colden, i. 108. ii. 126. Barrere, p. 170. 173.

‡ Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 326. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 236. Lozano, Hist. de Parag. i. 144.

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with him as he advances in life; and as his attention is directed to few objects, it acquires a degree of force unknown among men whose passions are dissipated and weakened by the variety of their occupations and pursuits. The desire of vengeance, which takes possession of the heart of savages, resembles the instinctive rage of an animal, rather than the passion of a man. It turns, with undiscerning fury, even against inanimate objects. If hurt accidentally by a stone, they often seize it in a transport of anger, and endeavour to wreak their vengeance upon it.* If struck with an arrow in a battle, they will tear it from the wound, break and bite it with their teeth, and dash it on the ground.† With respect to their enemies, the rage of vengeance knows no bounds. When under the dominion of this passion, man becomes the most cruel of all animals. He neither pities, nor forgives, nor spares.

The force of this passion is so well understood by the Americans themselves, that they always apply to it, in order to excite their people to take arms. If the elders of any tribe attempt to rouse their youth from sloth,

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* Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 190.

† Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 208. Herrera, dec. i. lib. vi. c. 8.

if a chief wishes to allure a band of warriors to follow him in invading an enemy's country, the most persuasive topics of their martial eloquence are drawn from revenge. "The bones of our countrymen," say they, "lie uncovered; their bloody bed has not been washed clean. Their spirits cry against us; they must be appeased. Let us go and devour the people by whom they were slain. Sit no longer inactive upon your mats; lift the hatchet, console the spirits of the dead, and tell them that they shall be avenged."*

and their perpetuity.

ANIMATED with such exhortations, the youth snatch their arms in a transport of fury, raise the song of war, and burn with impatience to embrue their hands in the blood of their enemies. Private chiefs often assemble small parties, and invade a hostile tribe, without consulting the rulers of the community. A single warrior, prompted by caprice or revenge, will take the field alone, and march several hundred miles to surprise and cut off a straggling enemy.† The exploits of a noted warrior, in such solitary excursions, often form the chief part in the history of an American campaign;‡

* Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 216, 217. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 204.

† See NOTE XXXVIII. Page 393.

‡ See NOTE XXXIX. Page 393.

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and their elders connive at such irregular sallies, as they tend to cherish a martial spirit, and accustom their people to enterprise and danger.* But when a war is national, and undertaken by public authority, the deliberations are formal and slow. The elders assemble, they deliver their opinions in solemn speeches, they weigh with maturity the nature of the enterprise, and balance its beneficial or disadvantageous consequences with no inconsiderable portion of political discernment or sagacity. Their priests and soothsayers are consulted, and sometimes they ask the advice even of their women.† If the determination be for war, they prepare for it with much ceremony. A leader offers to conduct the expedition, and is accepted. But no man is constrained to follow him; the resolution of the community to commence hostilities imposes no obligation upon any member to take part in the war. Each individual is still master of his own conduct, and his engagement in the service is perfectly voluntary.‡

Mode of carrying on war.

THE maxims by which they regulate their military operations, though extremely different

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* Bossu, i. 140. Lery ap. de Bry, 215. Hennepin, Mœurs des Sauv. 41. Lafitau, ii. 169.

† Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. 215. 268. Biet, 367. 380.

‡ Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. 217, 218.

from those which take place among more civilized and populous nations, are well suited to their own political state, and the nature of the country in which they act. They never take the field in numerous bodies, as it would require a greater effort of foresight and industry than is usual among savages, to provide for their subsistence, during a march of some hundred miles through dreary forests, or during a long voyage upon their lakes and rivers. Their armies are not encumbered with baggage or military stores. Each warrior, besides his arms, carries a mat and a small bag of pounded maize, and with these is completely equipped for any service. While at a distance from the enemy's frontier, they disperse through the woods, and support themselves with the game which they kill, or the fish which they catch. As they approach nearer to the territories of the nation which they intend to attack, they collect their troops, and advance with greater caution. Even in their hottest and most active wars, they proceed wholly by stratagem and ambuscade. They place not their glory in attacking their enemies with open force. To surprise and destroy is the greatest merit of a commander, and the highest pride of his followers. War and hunting are their only occupations, and they conduct both with the same spirit and the same arts. They follow the track of their enemies through the forest. They endeavour to disco-

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ver their haunts, they lurk in some thicket near to these, and, with the patience of a sportsman lying in wait for game, will continue in their station day after day, until they can rush upon their prey when most secure, and least able to resist them. If they meet no straggling party of the enemy, they advance towards their villages, but with such solicitude to conceal their own approach, that they often creep on their hands and feet through the woods, and paint their skins of the same colour with the withered leaves, in order to avoid detection.* If so fortunate as to remain unobserved, they set on fire the enemies' huts in the dead of night, and massacre the inhabitants, as they fly naked and defenceless from the flames. If they hope to effect a retreat without being pursued, they carry off some prisoners, whom they reserve for a more dreadful fate. But if, notwithstanding all their address and precautions, they find that their motions are discovered, that the enemy has taken the alarm, and is prepared to oppose them, they usually deem it most prudent to retire. They regard it as extreme folly to meet an enemy who is on his guard, upon equal terms, or to give battle in an open field. The most distinguished success is a disgrace to a

* Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 237, 238. Hennep. Mœurs des Sauv. p. 59.

leader, if it has been purchased with any considerable loss of his followers,* and they never boast of a victory, if stained with the blood of their own countrymen.† To fall in battle, instead of being reckoned an honourable death, is a misfortune which subjects the memory of a warrior to the imputation of rashness or imprudence.‡

Not owing to any defect of courage.

THIS system of war was universal in America; and the small uncivilized tribes, dispersed through all its different regions and climates, display more craft than boldness in carrying on their hostilities. Struck with this conduct, so opposite to the ideas and maxims of Europeans, several authors contend that it flows from a feeble and dastardly spirit peculiar to the Americans, which is incapable of any generous or manly exertion.§ But when we reflect that many of these tribes, on occasions which call for extraordinary efforts, not only defend themselves with obstinate resolution, but attack their enemies with the most daring courage, and that they possess fortitude of mind superior to the

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* See NOTE XL. Page 393.

† Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 238. 307. Biet, 381. Lafitau, Mœurs des Sauv. ii. 248.

‡ Charlev. iii. 376. See NOTE XLI. Page 394.

§ Recherches Philos. sur les Americ. i. 115. Voyage de March. iv. 410.

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sense of danger or the fear of death, we must ascribe their habitual caution to some other cause than constitutional timidity.* The number of men in each tribe is so small, the difficulty of rearing new members amidst the hardships and dangers of savage life so great, that the life of a citizen is extremely precious, and the preservation of it becomes a capital object in their policy. Had the point of honour been the same among the feeble American tribes as among the powerful nations of Europe; had they been taught to court fame or victory in contempt of danger and death, they must have been ruined by maxims so ill adapted to their condition. But wherever their communities are more populous, so that they can act with considerable force, and can sustain the loss of several of their members without being sensibly weakened, the military operations of the Americans more nearly resemble those of other nations. The Brasilians, as well as the tribes situated upon the banks of the river De la Plata, often take the field in such numerous bodies as deserve the name of armies.† They defy their enemies to the combat, engage in regular battles, and maintain the conflict with

* Lafitau, Mœurs des Sauv. ii. 248, 249. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 307.

† Fabri Veriss. Descrip. Indiæ ap. de Bry, vii. 42.

that desperate ferocity, which is natural to men who, having no idea of war but that of exterminating their enemies, never give or take quarter.* In the powerful empires of Mexico and Peru, great armies were assembled, frequent battles were fought, and the theory as well as practice of war were different from what took place in those petty societies which assume the name of nations.

Incapable of order or discipline.

But though vigilance and attention are the qualities chiefly requisite, where the object of war is to deceive and to surprise; and though the Americans, when acting singly, display an amazing degree of address in concealing their own motions, and discovering those of an enemy, yet it is remarkable, that, when they take the field in parties, they can seldom be brought to observe the precautions most essential to their own security. Such is the difficulty of accustoming savages to subordination, or to act in concert; such is their impatience under restraint, and such their caprice and presumption, that it is rarely they can be brought to conform themselves to the counsels and directions of their leaders. They never station sentinels around the place where they rest at night; and after marching some hun-

* See Note XLII. Page 395.

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dred miles to surprise an enemy, are often surprised themselves, and cut off, while sunk in as profound sleep as if they were not within reach of danger.*

If, notwithstanding this negligence and security, which often frustrate their most artful schemes, they catch the enemy unprepared, they rush upon them with the utmost ferocity, and tearing off the scalps of all those who fall victims to their rage,† they carry home those strange trophies in triumph. These they preserve as monuments, not only of their own prowess, but of the vengeance which their arm has inflicted upon the people who were objects of public resentment.‡ They are still more solicitous to seize prisoners. During their retreat, if they hope to effect it unmolested, the prisoners are commonly exempt from any insult, and treated with some degree of humanity, though guarded with the most strict attention.

Treatment of prisoners.

But after this temporary suspension, the rage of the conquerors rekindles with new fury. As soon as they approach their own

* Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 236, 237. Lettr. Edif. 17. 308. 20. 130. Lafit. Mœurs, 247. Lahontan, ii. 176.

† See Note XLIII. Page 395.

‡ Lafit. Mœurs, ii. 256.

frontier, some of their number are despatched to inform their countrymen with respect to the success of the expedition. Then the prisoners begin to feel the wretchedness of their condition. The women of the village, together with the youth who have not attained to the age of bearing arms, assemble, and forming themselves into two lines, through which the prisoners must pass, beat and bruise them with sticks or stones in a cruel manner.* After this first gratification of their rage against their enemies, follow lamentations for the loss of such of their own countrymen as have fallen in the service, accompanied with words and actions which seem to express the utmost anguish and grief. But in a moment, upon a signal given, their tears cease; they pass, with a sudden and unaccountable transition, from the depths of sorrow to transports of joy; and begin to celebrate their victory with all the wild exultation of a barbarous triumph.† The fate of the prisoners remains still undecided. The old men deliberate concerning it. Some are destined to be tortured to death, in order to satiate the revenge of the conquerors; some to replace the members which the community has lost in that or former wars. They

* Lahontan, ii. 184.

† Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 241. Lafit. Mœurs, ii. 264.

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who are reserved for this milder fate, are led to the huts of those whose friends have been killed. The women meet them at the door, and if they receive them, their sufferings are at an end. They are adopted into the family, and according to their phrase, are seated upon the mat of the deceased. They assume his name, they hold the same rank, and are treated thenceforward with all the tenderness due to a father, a brother, a husband, or a friend. But if, either from caprice or an unrelenting desire of revenge, the women of any family refuse to accept of the prisoner who is offered to them, his doom is fixed. No power can then save him from torture and death.

Their indifference concerning their fate,

WHILE their lot is in suspense, the prisoners themselves appear altogether unconcerned about what may befal them. They talk, they eat, they sleep, as if they were perfectly at ease, and no danger impending. When the fatal sentence is intimated to them, they receive it with an unaltered countenance, raise their death-song, and prepare to suffer like men. Their conquerors assemble as to a solemn festival, resolved to put the fortitude of the captive to the utmost proof. A scene ensues, the bare description of which is enough to chill the heart with horror, wherever men have been accustomed, by milder institutions, to respect their species, and to melt into ten-

and fortitude under torture.

derness at the sight of human sufferings. The prisoners are tied naked to a stake, but so as to be at liberty to move round it. All who are present, men, women, and children, rush upon them like furies. Every species of torture is applied that the rancour of revenge can invent. Some burn their limbs with red-hot irons, some mangle their bodies with knives, others tear their flesh from their bones, pluck out their nails by the roots, and rend and twist their sinews. They vie with one another in refinements of torture. Nothing sets bounds to their rage but the dread of abridging the duration of their vengeance by hastening the death of the sufferers; and such is their cruel ingenuity in tormenting, that, by avoiding industriously to hurt any vital part, they often prolong this scene of anguish for several days. In spite of all that they suffer, the victims continue to chant their death-song with a firm voice, they boast of their own exploits, they insult their tormentors for their want of skill in avenging their friends and relations, they warn them of the vengeance which awaits them on account of what they are now doing, and excite their ferocity by the most provoking reproaches and threats. To display undaunted fortitude in such dreadful situations, is the noblest triumph of a warrior. To avoid the trial by a voluntary death, or to shrink under it, is deemed infamous and cowardly. If any one betray

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symptoms of timidity, his tormentors often despatch him at once with contempt, as unworthy of being treated like a man.* Animated with those ideas, they endure, without a groan, what it seems almost impossible that human nature should sustain. They appear to be not only insensible of pain, but to court it. "Forbear," said an aged chief of the Iroquois, when his insults had provoked one of his tormentors to wound him with a knife, "forbear these stabs of your knife, and rather let me die by fire, that those dogs, your allies, from beyond the sea, may learn by my example to suffer like men."† This magnanimity, of which there are frequent instances among the American warriors, instead of exciting admiration, or calling forth sympathy, exasperates the fierce spirits of their torturers to fresh acts of cruelty.‡ Weary, at length, of contending with men whose constancy of mind they cannot vanquish, some chief, in a rage, puts a period to their sufferings, by despatching them with his dagger or club.§

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* De la Potherie, ii. 237. iii. 48.

† Colden, Hist. of Five Nations, i. 200.

‡ Voyages de Lahont. i. 236.

§ Charlev. Hist. N. Fran. iii. 243, &c. 385. Lafit. Mœurs, ii. 265. Creuxii Hist. Canad. p. 73. Hennep. Mœurs des Sauv. p. 64, &c. Lahont. i. 233, &c. Tertre, ii. 405. De la Potherie, ii. 22, &c.

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Sometimes eat their prisoners.

THIS barbarous scene is often succeeded by one no less shocking. As it is impossible to appease the fell spirit of revenge which rages in the heart of a savage, this frequently prompts the Americans to devour those unhappy persons who have been the victims of their cruelty. In the ancient world, tradition has preserved the memory of barbarous nations of cannibals, who fed on human flesh. But in every part of the New World there were people to whom this custom was familiar. It prevailed in the southern continent,* in several of the islands,† and in various districts of North America.‡ Even in those parts, where circumstances, with which we are unacquainted, had in a great measure abolished this practice, it seems formerly to have been so well known, that it is incorporated into the idiom of their language. Among the Iroquois, the phrase by which they express their resolution of making war against an enemy is, "Let us go and eat that nation." If they solicit the aid of a neighbouring tribe, they invite it to "eat broth made of the flesh of their ene-

* Stadius ap. de Bry, iii. 123. Lery, ibid. 210. Biet, 384. Lettr. Edif. 23. 341. Piso, 8. Condamine, 84. 97. Ribas, Hist. de los Triumf. 473.

† Life of Columb. 529. Mart. Dec. p. 18. Tertre, ii. 405.

‡ Dumont, Mem. i. 254. Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. i. 259. ii. 14. iii. 21. De la Potherie, iii. 50.

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mies."* Nor was the practice peculiar to rude unpolished tribes; the principle from which it took rise is so deeply rooted in the minds of the Americans, that it subsisted in Mexico, one of the civilized empires in the New World; and relics of it may be discovered among the more mild inhabitants of Peru. It was not scarcity of food, as some authors imagine, and the importunate cravings of hunger, which forced the Americans to those horrid repasts on their fellow-creatures. Human flesh was never used as common food in any country, and the various relations concerning people who reckoned it among the stated means of subsistence, flow from the credulity and mistakes of travellers. The rancour of revenge first prompted men to this barbarous action.† The fiercest tribes devoured none but prisoners taken in war, or such as they regarded as enemies.‡ Women and children, who were not the objects of enmity, if not cut off in the fury of their first inroad into an hostile country, seldom suffered by the deliberate effects of their revenge.§

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* Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 208, 209. Lettr. Edif. 23. p. 277. De la Potherie, ii. 298. See NOTE XLIV. Page 396.

† Biet, 383. Blanco, Conversion de Piritu, p. 28. Bancroft, Nat. Hist. of Guiana, p. 259, &c.

‡ See NOTE XLV. Page 396.

§ Biet, 382. Bandini, Vita di Amerigo, 84. Tertre, 405. Fermin, Descrip. de Surin. i. 54.

The people of South America gratify their revenge in a manner somewhat different, but with no less unrelenting rancour. Their prisoners, after meeting at their first entrance with the same rough reception as among the North Americans,* are not only exempt from injury, but treated with the greatest kindness. They are feasted and caressed, and some beautiful young women are appointed to attend and solace them. It is not easy to account for this part of their conduct, unless we impute it to a refinement in cruelty. For, while they seem studious to attach the captives to life, by supplying them with every enjoyment that can render it agreeable, their doom is irrevocably fixed. On a day appointed, the victorious tribe assembles, the prisoner is brought forth with great solemnity, he views the preparations for the sacrifice with as much indifference as if he himself were not the victim, and, meeting his fate with undaunted firmness, is despatched with a single blow. The moment he falls, the women seize the body, and dress it for the feast. They besmear their children with the blood, in order to kindle in their bosoms a hatred of their enemies, which is never extinguished; and all join in feeding upon the flesh with amazing

* Stadius ap. de Bry, iii. p. 40. 123.

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greediness and exultation.* To devour the body of a slaughtered enemy, they deem the most complete and exquisite gratification of revenge. Wherever this practice prevails, captives never escape death, but they are not tortured with the same cruelty as among tribes which are less accustomed to such horrid feasts.†

As the constancy of every American warrior may be put to such severe proof, the great object of military education and discipline in the New World, is to form the mind to sustain it. When nations carry on war with open force, defy their enemies to the combat, and vanquish them by the superiority of their skill or courage, soldiers are trained to be active, vigorous, and enterprising. But in America, where the genius and maxims of war are extremely different, passive fortitude is the quality in highest estimation. Accordingly, it is early the study of the Americans to acquire sentiments and habits, which will enable them to behave like men, when their resolution shall be put to the proof. As the youth of other nations exercise themselves in feats of activity and force, those of America vie with one another in exhibitions

* Stadius ap. de Bry, iii. 128, &c. Lery, ibid. 210.

† See NOTE XLVI. Page 397.

of their patience under sufferings. They harden their nerves by those voluntary trials, and gradually accustom themselves to endure the sharpest pain without complaining. A boy and girl will bind their naked arms together, and place a burning coal between them, in order to try who first discovers such impatience as to shake it off.* All the trials customary in America, when a youth is admitted into the class of warriors, or when a warrior is promoted to the dignity of captain or chief, are accommodated to this idea of manliness. They are not displays of valour, but of patience; they are not exhibitions of their ability to offend, but of their capacity to suffer. Among the tribes on the banks of the Orinoco, if a warrior aspires to the rank of captain, his probation begins with a long fast, more rigid than any ever observed by the most abstemious hermit. At the close of this the chiefs assemble; each gives him three lashes with a large whip, applied so vigorously, that his body is almost flayed, and if he betrays the least symptom of impatience, or even sensibility, he is disgraced for ever, and rejected as unworthy of the honour to which he aspires. After some interval, the constancy of the candidate is proved by a more excruciating trial. He is laid in a ham-

* Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 307.

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mock with his hands bound fast, and an innumerable multitude of venomous ants, whose bite occasions exquisite pain, and produces a violent inflammation, are thrown upon him. The judges of his merit stand around the hammock, and, while these cruel insects fasten upon the most sensible parts of his body, a sigh, a groan, an involuntary motion expressive of what he suffers, would exclude him for ever from the rank of captain. Even after this evidence of his fortitude, it is not deemed to be completely ascertained, but must stand another test more dreadful than any he has hitherto undergone. He is again suspended in his hammock, and covered with leaves of the palmetto. A fire of stinking herbs is kindled underneath, so as he may feel its heat, and be involved in its smoke. Though scorched and almost suffocated, he must continue to endure with the same patient insensibility. Many perish in this rude essay of their firmness and courage, but such as go through it with applause, receive the ensigns of their new dignity with much solemnity, and are ever after regarded as leaders of approved resolution, whose behaviour, in the most trying situations, will do honour to their country.* In North America, the previous trial of a warrior is neither so formal nor

* Gumilla, ii. 286, &c. Biet, 376, &c.

so severe; though even there, before a youth is permitted to bear arms, his patience and fortitude are proved by blows, by fire, and by insults, more intolerable to a haughty spirit than both.*

THE amazing steadiness with which the Americans endure the most exquisite torments, has induced some authors to suppose that, from the peculiar feebleness of their frame, their sensibility is not so acute as that of other people; as women, and persons of a relaxed habit, are observed to be less affected with pain than robust men, whose nerves are more firmly braced. But the constitution of the Americans is not so different, in its texture, from that of the rest of the human species, as to account for this diversity in their behaviour. It flows from a principle of honour, instilled early, and cultivated with such care, as to inspire man in his rudest state with an heroic magnanimity, to which philosophy hath endeavoured, in vain, to form him, when more highly improved and polished. This invincible constancy he has been taught to consider as the chief distinction of a man, and the highest attainment of a warrior. The ideas which influence his conduct, and the passions which take possession of his heart, are

* Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 219.

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few. They operate of course with more decisive effect, than when the mind is crowded with a multiplicity of objects, or distracted by the variety of its pursuits; and when every motive that acts with any force in forming the sentiments of a savage, prompts him to suffer with dignity, he will bear what might seem to be impossible for human patience to sustain. But wherever the fortitude of the Americans is not roused to exertion by their ideas of honour, their feelings of pain are the same with those of the rest of mankind.* Nor is that patience under sufferings, for which the Americans have been so justly celebrated, an universal attainment. The constancy of many of the victims is overcome by the agonies of torture. Their weakness and lamentations complete the triumph of their enemies, and reflect disgrace upon their own country.†

Wasted by their perpetual wars.

THE perpetual hostilities carried on among the American tribes, are productive of very fatal effects. Even in seasons of public tranquillity, their imperfect industry does not supply them with any superfluous store of provisions; but when the irruption of an enemy

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* See NOTE XLVII. Page 398.

† Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 248. 385. De la Potherie, iii. 48.

desolates their cultivated lands, or disturbs them in their hunting excursions, such a calamity reduces a community, naturally improvident and destitute of resources, to extreme want. All the people of the district that is invaded, are frequently forced to take refuge in woods or mountains, which can afford them little subsistence, and where many of them perish. Notwithstanding their excessive caution in conducting their military operations, and the solicitude of every leader to preserve the lives of his followers, as the rude tribes in America seldom enjoy any interval of peace, the loss of men among them is considerable in proportion to the degree of population. Thus famine and the sword combine in thinning their numbers. All their communities are feeble, and nothing now remains of several nations, which were once considerable, but the name.*

Recruit their numbers by adopting prisoners.

SENSIBLE of this continual decay, there are tribes which endeavour to recruit their national force when exhausted, by adopting prisoners taken in war, and by this expedient prevent their total extinction. The practice, however, is not universally received. Resentment ope-

* Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 202, 203. 429. Gumilla, ii. 227, &c.

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rates more powerfully among savages, than considerations of policy. Far the greater part of their captives was anciently sacrificed to their vengeance, and it is only since their numbers began to decline fast, that they have generally adopted milder maxims. But such as they do naturalize, renounce for ever their native tribe, and assume the manners as well as passions of the people by whom they are adopted,* so entirely, that they often join them in expeditions against their own countrymen. Such a sudden transition, and so repugnant to one of the most powerful instincts implanted by nature, would be deemed strange among many people; but among the members of small communities, where national enmity is violent and deep-rooted, it has the appearance of being still more unaccountable. It seems, however, to result naturally from the principles upon which war is carried on in America. When nations aim at exterminating their enemies, no exchange of prisoners can ever take place. From the moment one is made a prisoner, his country and his friends consider him as dead.† He has incurred indelible disgrace by suffering himself to be surprised or to be taken by an enemy; and were he to return

* Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 245, &c. Lafit. ii. 308.

† See NOTE XLVIII. Page 398.

home, after such a stain upon his honour, his nearest relations would not receive or even acknowledge that they knew him.* Some tribes were still more rigid, and if a prisoner returned, the infamy which he had brought on his country was expiated by putting him instantly to death.† As the unfortunate captive is thus an outcast from his own country, and the ties which bound him to it are irreparably broken, he feels less reluctance in forming a new connexion with people, who, as an evidence of their friendly sentiments, not only deliver him from a cruel death, but offer to admit him to all the rights of a fellow-citizen. The perfect similarity of manners among savage nations facilitates and completes the union, and induces a captive to transfer not only his allegiance, but his affection, to the community into the bosom of which he is received.

Their inferiority in war to polished nations.

But though war be the chief occupation of men in their rude state, and to excel in it their highest distinction and pride, their inferiority is always manifest when they engage in competition with polished nations. Destitute of that foresight which discerns and provides for re-

* Lahont. ii. 185, 186.

† Herrera, dec. 3. lib. iv. c. 16. p. 173.

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mote events, strangers to the union and mutual confidence requisite in forming any extensive plan of operations, and incapable of the subordination no less requisite in carrying such plans into execution, savage nations may astonish a disciplined enemy by their valour, but seldom prove formidable to him by their conduct; and whenever the contest is of long continuance, must yield to superior art.* The empires of Peru and Mexico, though their progress in civilization, when measured by the European or Asiatic standards, was inconsiderable, acquired such an ascendency over the rude tribes around them, that they subjected most of them with great facility to their power. When the people of Europe overran the various provinces of America, this superiority was still more conspicuous. Neither the courage nor number of the natives could repel a handful of invaders. The alienation and enmity prevalent among barbarians, prevented them from uniting in any common scheme of defence, and while each tribe fought separately, all were subdued.

Their arts.

VI. THE arts of rude nations unacquainted with the use of metals, hardly merit any attention on their own account, but are worthy of

* See NOTE XLIX. Page 399.

some notice, as far as they serve to display the genius and manners of man in this stage of his progress. The first distress a savage must feel, will arise from the manner in which his body is affected, by the heat, or cold, or moisture, of the climate under which he lives; and his first care will be to provide some covering for his own defence. In the warmer and more mild climates of America, none of the rude tribes were clothed. To most of them, nature had not even suggested any idea of impropriety in being altogether uncovered.* As, under a mild climate, there was little need of any defence from the injuries of the air, and their extreme indolence shunned every species of labour to which it was not urged by absolute necessity, all the inhabitants of the isles, and a considerable part of the people on the continent, remained in this state of naked simplicity. Others were satisfied with some slight covering, such as decency required. But though naked, they were not unadorned. They dressed their hair in many different forms. They fastened bits of gold, or shells, or shining stones, in their ears, their noses, and cheeks.† They stained their skins with a great variety

Dress and ornaments.

* Lery, Navigat. ap. de Bry, iii. p. 164. Life of Columbus, c. 24. Venegas, Hist. of Californ. p. 70.

† Lery ap. de Bry, iii. p. 165. Lettr. Edif. 20. 223.

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of figures; and they spent much time, and submitted to great pain, in ornamenting their persons in this fantastic manner. Vanity, however, which finds endless occupation for ingenuity and invention, in nations where dress has become a complex and intricate art, is circumscribed within so narrow bounds, and confined to so few articles among naked savages, that they are not satisfied with those simple decorations, and have a wonderful propensity to alter the natural form of their bodies, in order to render it (as they imagine) more perfect and beautiful. This practice was universal among the rudest of the American tribes. Their operations for that purpose begin as soon as an infant is born. By compressing the bones of the skull, while still soft and flexible, some flatten the crown of their heads; some squeeze them into the shape of a cone; others mould them as much as possible into a square figure; * and they often endanger the lives of their posterity, by their violent and absurd efforts to derange the plan of nature, or to improve upon her designs. But in all their attempts either to adorn or to new-

* Oviedo, Hist. lib. iii. c. 5. Ulloa, i. 329. Voyage de Labat, ii. 72. Charlevoix, iii. 323. Gumilla, i. 197, &c. Acugna, Relat. de la Riv. des Amaz. ii. 83. Lawson's Voyage to Carolina, p. 33.

model their persons, it seems to have been less the object of the Americans to please, or to appear beautiful, than to give an air of dignity and terror to their aspect. Their attention to dress had more reference to war than to gallantry. The difference in rank and estimation between the two sexes was so great, as seems to have extinguished, in some measure, their solicitude to appear mutually amiable. The man deemed it beneath him to adorn his person, for the sake of one on whom he was accustomed to look down as a slave. It was when the warrior had in view to enter the council of his nation, or to take the field against its enemies, that he assumed his choicest ornaments, and decked his person with the nicest care.* The decorations of the women were few and simple; whatever was precious or splendid was reserved for the men. In several tribes, the women were obliged to spend a considerable part of their time every day in adorning and painting their husbands, and could bestow little attention upon ornamenting themselves. Among a race of men so haughty as to despise, or so cold as to neglect them, the women naturally became careless and slovenly, and the love of finery and show, which has been

* Wafer's Voyage, p. 142. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 167. Charlev. Hist. N. Fran. iii. 216. 222.

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deemed their favourite passion, was confined chiefly to the other sex.* To deck his person was the distinction of a warrior, as well as one of his most serious occupations.† In one part of their dress, which, at first sight, appears the most singular and capricious, the Americans have discovered considerable sagacity in providing against the chief inconveniences of their climate, which is often sultry and moist to excess. All the different tribes which remain unclothed, are accustomed to anoint and rub their bodies with the grease of animals, with viscous gums, and with oils of different kinds. By this they check that profuse perspiration, which, in the torrid zone, wastes the vigour of the frame, and abridges the period of human life. By this, too, they provide a defence against the extreme moisture during the rainy season.‡ They likewise, at certain seasons, temper paint of different colours with those unctuous substances, and bedaub themselves plentifully with that composition. Sheathed with this impenetrable varnish, their skins are not only protected from the penetrating heat of the sun, but as all the innu-

* Charlev. Hist. de la Nouv. Fran. iii. 278. 327. Lafit. ii. 53. Kalm's Voyage, iii. 273. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 169, 170. Purch. Pilgr. iv. 1287. Ribas, Hist. de los Triumf. &c. 472.

† See NOTE L. Page 399. ‡ See NOTE LI. Page 400.

merable tribes of insects have an antipathy to the smell or taste of that mixture, they are delivered from their teasing persecution, which, amidst forests and marshes, especially in the warmer regions, would have been altogether intolerable in a state of perfect nakedness.*

Habitations.

THE next object to dress that will engage the attention of a savage, is to prepare some habitation which may afford him shelter by day, and a retreat at night. Whatever is connected with his ideas of personal dignity, whatever bears any reference to his military character, the savage warrior deems an object of importance. Whatever relates only to peaceable and inactive life, he views with indifference. Hence, though finically attentive to dress, he is little solicitous about the elegance or disposition of his habitation. Savage nations, far from that state of improvement in which the mode of living is considered as a mark of distinction, and unacquainted with those wants which require a variety of accommodation, regulate the construction of their houses according to their limited ideas of necessity. Some of the American tribes were so extremely rude, and had advanced so little

* Labat, ii. 93. Gumilla, i. 190. 202. Bancroft, Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 81. 280.

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beyond the primeval simplicity of nature, that they had no houses at all. During the day, they take shelter from the scorching rays of the sun under thick trees; at night, they form a shed with their branches and leaves.* In the rainy season they retire into coves, formed by the hand of nature, or hollowed out by their own industry.† Others, who have no fixed abode, and roam through the forest in quest of game, sojourn in temporary huts, which they erect with little labour, and abandon without any concern. The inhabitants of those vast plains which are deluged by the overflowing of rivers, during the heavy rains that fall periodically between the tropics, raise houses upon piles fastened in the ground, or place them among the boughs of trees, and are thus safe amidst that wide extended inundation which surrounds them.‡ Such were the first essays of the rudest Americans towards providing themselves with habitations. But even among tribes which are more improved, and whose residence is become altogether fixed, the structure of

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* See NOTE LII. Page 400.

† Lettres Edif. v. 273. Venegas, Hist. of Califor. i. 76. Lozano, Descrip. del. Gran Chaco, p. 55. Lettres Edif. ii. 176. Gumilla, i. 383. Bancroft, Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 277.

‡ Gumilla, i. 225. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. ix. c. 6. Oviedo, Sommar. p. 53. C.

their houses is extremely mean and simple. They are wretched huts, sometimes of an oblong and sometimes of a circular form, intended merely for shelter, with no view to elegance, and little attention to conveniency. The doors are so low that it is necessary to bend or to creep on the hands and feet in order to enter them. They are without windows, and have a large hole in the middle of the roof, to convey out the smoke. To follow travellers in other minute circumstances of their descriptions, is not only beneath the dignity of history, but would be foreign to the object of my researches. One circumstance merits attention, as it is singular, and illustrates the character of the people. Some of their houses are so large as to contain accommodation for fourscore or a hundred persons. These are built for the reception of different families, which dwell together under the same roof,* and often around a common fire, without separate apartments, or any kind of screen or partition between the spaces which they respectively occupy. As soon as men have acquired distinct ideas of property; or when they are so much attached to their females, as to watch them with care and jealousy; families, of course, divide and settle in separate houses,

* See NOTE LIII. Page 401.

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where they can secure and guard whatever they wish to preserve. This singular mode of habitation among several people of America, may therefore be considered, not only as the effect of their imperfect notions concerning property, but as a proof of inattention and indifference towards their women. If they had not been accustomed to perfect equality, such an arrangement could not have taken place. If their sensibility had been apt to have taken alarm, they would not have trusted the virtue of their women amidst the temptations and opportunities of such a promiscuous intercourse. At the same time, the perpetual concord which reigns in habitations where so many families are crowded together, is surprising, and affords a striking evidence that they must be people of either a very gentle, or of a very phlegmatic temper, who, in such a situation, are unacquainted with animosity, brawling, and discord.*

Their arms.

After making some provision for his dress and habitation, a savage will perceive the necessity of preparing proper arms with which to assault or repel an enemy. This, accordingly,

* Journ. de Grillet et Bechamel dans la Goyane, p. 65. Lafit. Mœurs, ii. 4. Torquem. Monarq. i. 247. Journal, Hist. de Joutel, 217. Lery, Hist. Brasil. ap. de Bry, iii. 238. Lozano, Descr. del Gran Chaco, 67.

has early exercised the ingenuity and invention of all rude nations. The first offensive weapons were doubtless such as chance presented, and the first efforts of art to improve upon these, were extremely awkward and simple. Clubs made of some heavy wood, stakes hardened in the fire, lances whose heads were armed with flint or the bones of some animal, are weapons known to the rudest nations. All these, however, were of use only in close encounter. But men wished to annoy their enemies while at a distance, and the bow and arrow is the most early invention for this purpose. This weapon is in the hands of people whose advances in improvement are extremely inconsiderable, and is familiar to the inhabitants of every quarter of the globe. It is remarkable, however, that some tribes in America were so destitute of art and ingenuity, that they had not attained to the discovery of this simple invention,* and seem to have been unacquainted with the use of any missive weapon. The sling, though in its construction not more complex than the bow, and among many nations of equal antiquity, was little known to the people of North America,† or the islands, but appears to have been used by a few tribes in the southern con-

* Piedrahita, Conq. del Nuevo Reyno, ix. 12.

† Naufr. de Alv. Nun. Cabeza de Baca, c. x. p. 12.

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tinent.* The people in some provinces of Chili, and those of Patagonia, towards the southern extremity of America, use a weapon peculiar to themselves. They fasten stones, about the size of a fist, to each end of a leather thong of eight feet in length, and swinging these round their heads, throw them with such dexterity, that they seldom miss the object at which they aim.†

Their domestic utensils.

Among people who had hardly any occupation but war or hunting, the chief exertions of their invention,‡ as well as industry, were naturally directed towards these objects. With respect to every thing else, their wants and desires were so limited, that their invention was not upon the stretch. As their food and habitations are perfectly simple, their domestic utensils are few and rude. Some of the southern tribes had discovered the art of forming vessels of earthen ware, and baking them in the sun so as they could endure the fire. In North America, they hollowed a piece of hard wood into the form of a kettle, and filling it with water, brought it to boil by putting red-hot stones into it.§ These vessels they used in

* Piedrah. p. 16. See Note LIV. Page 402.

† Ovalle's Relation of Chili; Church. Collect. iii. 82. Falkner's Descript. of Patagon. p. 130.

‡ See Note LV. Page 402.

§ Charlev. Hist. N. Fran. iii. 332.

preparing part of their provisions; and this may be considered as a step towards refinement and luxury, for men in their rudest state were not acquainted with any method of dressing their victuals but by roasting them on the fire; and among several tribes in America, this is the only species of cookery yet known.* But the masterpiece of art among the savages of America, is the construction of their canoes. An Esquimaux, shut up in his boat of whalebone, covered with the skins of seals, can brave that stormy ocean, on which the barrenness of his country compels him to depend for the chief part of his subsistence.† The people of Canada venture upon their rivers and lakes in boats made of the bark of trees, and so light that two men can carry them, wherever shallows or cataracts obstruct the navigation.‡ In these frail vessels they undertake and accomplish long voyages.§ The inhabitants of the isles, and of the southern continent, form their canoes by hollowing the trunk of a large tree, with infinite labour; and though in appearance they are extremely awkward and unwieldy, they paddle and steer them with such dexterity, that Europeans, well acquainted with all the improvements in the science of navigation,

Dressing their food.

Construction of their canoes.

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* See Note LVI. Page 403. † Ellis' Voy. 133.
‡ See Note LVII. Page 403. § Lafit. Mœurs, &c. ii. 213.

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have been astonished at the rapidity of their motion, and the quickness of their evolutions. Their *pirogues*, or war-boats, are so large as to carry forty or fifty men; their canoes employed in fishing and in short voyages are less capacious.* The form as well as materials of all these various kinds of vessels, is well adapted to the service for which they are destined; and the more minutely they are examined, the mechanism of their structure, as well as neatness of their fabric, will appear the more surprising.

Listlessness with which they apply to labour.

But, in every attempt towards industry among the Americans, one striking quality in their character is conspicuous. They apply to work without ardour, carry it on with little activity, and, like children, are easily diverted from it. Even in operations which seem the most interesting, and where the most powerful motives urge them to vigorous exertions, they labour with a languid listlessness. Their work advances under their hand with such slowness, that an eye-witness compares it to the imperceptible progress of vegetation.† They will spend so many years in forming a canoe, that it often begins to rot with age before they finish

* Labat, Voyages, ii. 91, &c. 131.
† Gumilla, ii. 297.

it. They will suffer one part of a roof to decay and perish, before they complete the other.* The slightest manual operation consumes an amazing length of time, and what in polished nations would hardly be an effort of industry, is among savages an arduous undertaking. This slowness of the Americans in executing works of every kind, may be imputed to various causes. Among savages, who do not depend for subsistence upon the efforts of regular industry, time is of so little importance, that they set no value upon it; and provided they can finish a design, they never regard how long they are employed about it. The tools which they employ are so awkward and defective, that every work in which they engage must necessarily be tedious. The hand of the most industrious and skilful artist, were it furnished with no better instrument than a stone hatchet, a shell, or the bone of some animal, would find it difficult to perfect the most simple work. It is by length of labour that he must endeavour to supply his defect of power. But above all, the cold phlegmatic temper peculiar to the Americans, renders their operations languid. It is almost impossible to rouse them from that habitual indolence in which they are sunk; and unless when engaged in war or hunting, they

* Borde, Relat. des Caraibes, p. 22.

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seem incapable of exerting any vigorous effort. Their ardour of application is not so great as to call forth that inventive spirit which suggests expedients for facilitating and abridging labour. They will return to a task day after day, but all their methods of executing it are tedious and operose.* Even since the Europeans have communicated to them the knowledge of their instruments, and taught them to imitate their arts, the peculiar genius of the Americans is conspicuous in every attempt they make. They may be patient and assiduous in labour, they can copy with a servile and minute accuracy, but discover little invention, and no talents for despatch. In spite of instruction and example, the spirit of the race predominates; their motions are naturally tardy, and it is in vain to urge them to quicken their pace. Among the Spaniards in America, *the work of an Indian* is a phrase by which they describe any thing, in the execution of which an immense time has been employed, and much labour wasted.†

Their religion.

VII. No circumstance respecting rude nations has been the object of greater curiosity than their religious tenets and rites; and none,

* See NOTE LVIII. Page 404.

† Voyages de Ulloa, i. 335. Lettr. Edif. &c. 15. 348.

Peculiar difficulties in this inquiry.

perhaps, has been so imperfectly understood, or represented with so little fidelity. Priests and missionaries are the persons who have had the best opportunities of carrying on this inquiry, among the most uncivilized of the American tribes. Their minds, engrossed by the doctrines of their own religion, and habituated to its institutions, are apt to discover something which resembles those objects of their veneration, in the opinions and rites of every people. Whatever they contemplate, they view through one medium, and draw and accommodate it to their own system. They study to reconcile the institutions which fall under their observation, to their own creed, not to explain them according to the rude notions of the people themselves. They ascribe to them ideas which they are incapable of forming, and suppose them to be acquainted with principles and facts, which it is impossible that they should know. Hence, some missionaries have been induced to believe, that even among the most barbarous nations in America, they had discovered traces, no less distinct than amazing, of their acquaintance with the sublime mysteries and peculiar institutions of Christianity. From their own interpretation of certain expressions and ceremonies, they have concluded that these people had some knowledge of the doctrine of the Trinity, of the incarnation of the Son of God, of his expiatory sacrifice, of the virtue of

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the cross, and of the efficacy of the sacraments.* In such unintelligent and credulous guides we can place little confidence.

But, even when we make our choice of conductors with the greatest care, we must not follow them with implicit faith. An inquiry into the religious notions of rude nations is involved in peculiar intricacies, and we must often pause in order to separate the facts which our informers relate, from the reasonings with which they are accompanied, or the theories which they build upon them. Several pious writers, more attentive to the importance of the subject than to the condition of the people whose sentiments they were endeavouring to discover, have bestowed much unprofitable labour in researches of this nature.†

Confined to two articles.

There are two fundamental doctrines, upon which the whole system of religion, as far as it can be discovered by the light of nature, is established. The one respects the being of a God; the other, the immortality of the soul. To discover the ideas of the uncultivated nations under our review with regard to those

* Venegas, i. 88. 92. Torquemada, ii. 445. Garcia, Origen, 122. Herrera, dec. 4. lib. ix. c. 7. dec. 5. lib. iv. c. 7.

† See Note LIX. Page 404.

important points, is not only an object of curiosity, but may afford instruction. To these two articles I shall confine my researches, leaving subordinate opinions, and the detail of local superstitions, to more minute inquirers. Whoever has had any opportunity of examining into the religious opinions of persons in the inferior ranks of life, even in the most enlightened and civilized nations, will find that their system of belief is derived from instruction, not discovered by inquiry. That numerous part of the human species, whose lot is labour, whose principal and almost sole occupation is to secure subsistence, views the arrangement and operations of nature with little reflection, and has neither leisure nor capacity for entering into that path of refined and intricate speculation, which conducts to the knowledge of the principles of natural religion. In the early and most rude periods of savage life, such disquisitions are altogether unknown. When the intellectual powers are just beginning to unfold, and their first feeble exertions are directed towards a few objects of primary necessity and use; when the faculties of the mind are so limited, as not to have formed abstract or general ideas; when language is so barren, as to be destitute of names to distinguish any thing that is not perceived by some of the senses; it is preposterous to expect that man should be capable of tracing with accuracy the relation

The being of God.

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between cause and effect; or to suppose that he should rise from the contemplation of the one to the knowledge of the other, and form just conceptions of a Deity, as the Creator and Governor of the universe. The idea of creation is so familiar wherever the mind is enlarged by science, and illuminated with revelation, that we seldom reflect how profound and abstruse this idea is, or consider what progress man must have made in observation and research, before he could arrive at any knowledge of this elementary principle in religion. Accordingly, several tribes have been discovered in America, which have no idea whatever of a Supreme Being, and no rites of religious worship. Inattentive to that magnificent spectacle of beauty and order presented to their view; unaccustomed to reflect either upon what they themselves are, or to inquire who is the author of their existence,—men, in their savage state, pass their days like the animals around them, without knowledge or veneration of any superior power. Some rude tribes have not in their language any name for the Deity, nor have the most accurate observers been able to discover any practice or institution which seemed to imply that they recognized his authority, or were solicitous to obtain his favour.* It is

* Biet, 539. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 221. Nieuhoff; Church. Coll. ii. 132. Lettr. Edif. 2. 177. Id. 12, 13.

however only among men in the most uncultivated state of nature, and while their intellectual faculties are so feeble and limited as hardly to elevate them above the irrational creation, that we discover this total insensibility to the impressions of any invisible power.

But the human mind, formed for religion, soon opens to the reception of ideas, which are destined, when corrected and refined, to be the great source of consolation amidst the calamities of life. Among some of the American tribes, still in the infancy of improvement, we discern apprehensions of some invisible and powerful beings. These apprehensions are originally indistinct and perplexed, and seem to be suggested rather by the dread of impending evils, than to flow from gratitude for blessings received. While nature holds on her course with uniform and undisturbed regularity, men enjoy the benefits resulting from it, without inquiring concerning its cause. But every de-

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Venegas, i. 87. Lozano, Descript. del Gran Chaco, 59. Fernand. Mission. de Chequit. 39. Gumilla, ii. 156. Rochefort, Hist. des Antilles, p. 468. Margrave, Hist. in Append. de Chiliensibus, 286. Ulloa, Notic. Americ. 335, &c. Barrere, 218, 219. Harcourt, Voyage to Guiana; Purch. Pilgr. iv. p. 1273. Account of Brasil, by a Portuguese; Ibid. p. 1289. Jones's Journal, p. 59. See NOTE LX. Page 405.

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viation from this regular course rouses and astonishes them. When they behold events to which they are not accustomed, they search for the reasons of them with eager curiosity. Their understanding is unable to penetrate into these; but imagination, a more forward and ardent faculty of the mind, decides without hesitation. It ascribes the extraordinary occurrences in nature to the influence of invisible beings, and supposes that the thunder, the hurricane, and the earthquake, are effects of their interposition. Some such confused notion of spiritual or invisible power, superintending over those natural calamities which frequently desolate the earth, and terrify its inhabitants, may be traced among many rude nations.* But besides this, the disasters and dangers of savage life are so many, and men often find themselves in situations so formidable, that the mind, sensible of its own weakness, has no resource but in the guidance and protection of wisdom and power superior to what is human. Dejected with calamities which oppress him, and exposed to dangers which he cannot repel, the savage no longer relies upon himself; he feels his own impotence, and sees no prospect of being extricated but by the interposition of some unseen arm. Hence, in all unenlightened nations, the

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* See NOTE LXI. Page 405.

first rites or practices which bear any resemblance to acts of religion, have it for their object to avert evils which men suffer or dread. The *Manitous* or *Okkis* of the North Americans were amulets or charms, which they imagined to be of such virtue, as to preserve the persons who reposed confidence in them from every disastrous event, or they were considered as tutelary spirits, whose aid they might implore in circumstances of distress.* The *Cemis* of the islanders were reputed by them to be the authors of every calamity that afflicts the human race; they were represented under the most frightful forms, and religious homage was paid to them with no other view than to appease these furious deities.† Even among those tribes whose religious system was more enlarged, and who had formed some conception of benevolent beings which delighted in conferring benefits, as well as of malicious powers prone to inflict evil, superstition still appears as the offspring of fear, and all its efforts were employed to avert calamities. They were persuaded that their good deities, prompted by the beneficence of their nature, would bestow every blessing in

* Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 343, &c. Creuxii Hist. Canad. p. 82, &c.

† Oviedo, lib. iii. c. 1. p. 111. P. Martyr, dec. p. 102, &c.

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their power, without solicitation or acknowledgment; and their only anxiety was to sooth and deprecate the wrath of the powers whom they regarded as the enemies of mankind.*

Such were the imperfect conceptions of the greater part of the Americans with respect to the interpositions of invisible agents, and such, almost universally, was the mean and illiberal object of their superstitions. Were we to trace back the ideas of other nations to that rude state in which history first presents them to our view, we should discover a surprising resemblance in their tenets and practices; and should be convinced, that, in similar circumstances, the faculties of the human mind hold nearly the same course in their progress, and arrive at almost the same conclusions. The impressions of fear are conspicuous in all the systems of superstition formed in this situation. The most exalted notions of men rise no higher than to a perplexed apprehension of certain beings, whose power, though supernatural, is limited as well as partial.

Remarkable diversity in their religious notions.

But, among other tribes, which have been longer united, or have made greater progress

* Tertre, ii. 365. Borde, p. 14. State of Virginia, by a Native, book iii. p. 32, 33. Dumont, i. 165. Bancroft, Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 309.

in improvement, we discern some feeble pointing towards more just and adequate conceptions of the power that presides in nature. They seem to perceive that there must be some universal cause to whom all things are indebted for their being. If we may judge by some of their expressions, they appear to acknowledge a divine power to be the maker of the world, and the disposer of all events. They denominate him the *Great Spirit.** But these ideas are faint and confused, and when they attempt to explain them, it is manifest, that among them the word *spirit* has a meaning very different from that in which we employ it, and that they have no conception of any deity but what is corporeal. They believe their gods to be of the human form, though of a nature more excellent than man, and retail such wild incoherent fables concerning their functions and operations, as are altogether unworthy of a place in history. Even among these tribes, there is no established form of public worship; there are no temples erected in honour of their deities; and no ministers peculiarly consecrated to their service. They have the knowledge, however, of several superstitious ceremonies and practices handed down to them by tradi-

* Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 343. Sagard, Voy. du Pays des Hurons, 226.

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tion, and to these they have recourse with a childish credulity, when roused by any emergence from their usual insensibility, and excited to acknowledge the power, and to implore the protection of superior beings.*

System of the Natchez.

The tribe of the Natchez, and the people of Bogota, had advanced beyond the other uncultivated nations of America in their ideas of religion as well as in their political institutions; and it is no less difficult to explain the cause of this distinction, than of that which we have already considered. The Sun was the chief object of religious worship among the Natchez. In their temples, which were constructed with some magnificence, and decorated with various ornaments, according to their mode of architecture, they preserved a perpetual fire, as the purest emblem of their divinity. Ministers were appointed to watch and feed this sacred flame. The first function of the great chief of the nation, every morning, was an act of obeisance to the sun; and festivals returned at stated seasons, which were celebrated by the whole community with solemn but unbloody rites.† This is the most refined species of su-

* Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 345. Colden, i. 17.

† Dumont, i. 158, &c. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 417, &c. 429. Lafitau, i. 167.

perstition known in America, and, perhaps, one of the most natural as well as most seducing. The sun is the apparent source of the joy, fertility, and life, diffused through nature; and while the human mind, in its earlier essays towards inquiry, contemplates and admires his universal and animating energy, its admiration is apt to stop short at what is visible, without reaching to the unseen cause; and pays that adoration to the most glorious and beneficial work of God, which is due only to him who formed it. As fire is the purest and most active of the elements, and in some of its qualities and effects resembles the sun, it was, not improperly, chosen to be the emblem of his powerful operation. The ancient Persians, a people far superior, in every respect, to that rude tribe whose rites I am describing, founded their religious system on similar principles, and established a form of public worship, less gross and exceptionable than that of any people destitute of guidance from revelation. This surprising coincidence in sentiment between two nations, in such different states of improvement, is one of the many singular and unaccountable circumstances which occur in the history of human affairs.

Among the people of Bogota, the sun and moon were, likewise, the chief objects of veneration. Their system of religion was more re-

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gular and complete, though less pure, than that of the Natchez. They had temples, altars, priests, sacrifices, and that long train of ceremonies, which superstition introduces wherever she has fully established her dominion over the minds of men. But the rites of their worship were cruel and bloody. They offered human victims to their deities, and many of their practices nearly resembled the barbarous institutions of the Mexicans, the genius of which we shall have an opportunity of considering more attentively in its proper place.*

Their ideas concerning the immortality of the soul,

With respect to the other great doctrine of religion, concerning the immortality of the soul, the sentiments of the Americans were more united: The human mind, even when least improved and invigorated by culture, shrinks from the thoughts of annihilation, and looks forward with hope and expectation to a state of future existence. This sentiment, resulting from a secret consciousness of its own dignity, from an instinctive longing after immortality, is universal, and may be deemed natural. Upon this are founded the most exalted hopes of man in his highest state of im-

* Piedrahita, Conq. del N. Reyno, p. 17. Herrera, dec. 6. lib. v. c. 6.

provement; nor has nature withheld from him this soothing consolation, in the most early and rude period of his progress. We can trace this opinion from one extremity of America to the other, in some regions more faint and obscure, in others more perfectly developed, but nowhere unknown. The most uncivilized of its savage tribes do not apprehend death as the extinction of being. All entertain hopes of a future and more happy state, where they shall be for ever exempt from the calamities which imbitter human life in its present condition. This future state they conceive to be a delightful country, blessed with perpetual spring, whose forests abound with game, whose rivers swarm with fish, where famine is never felt, and uninterrupted plenty shall be enjoyed without labour or toil. But as men, in forming their first imperfect ideas concerning the invisible world, suppose that there they shall continue to feel the same desires, and to be engaged in the same occupations, as in the present world; they naturally ascribe eminence and distinction, in that state, to the same qualities and talents which are here the object of their esteem. The Americans, accordingly, allotted the highest place, in their country of spirits, to the skilful hunter, to the adventurous and successful warrior, and to such as had tortured the greatest number of captives, and

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Induce them to bury arms, &c. with the dead.

devoured their flesh.* These notions were so prevalent, that they gave rise to an universal custom, which is at once the strongest evidence that the Americans believe in a future state, and the best illustration of what they expect there. As they imagine, that departed spirits begin their career anew in the world whither they are gone, that their friends may not enter upon it defenceless and unprovided, they bury together with the bodies of the dead, their bow their arrows, and other weapons used in hunting or war; they deposite in their tombs the skins or stuffs of which they make garments, Indian corn, manioc, venison, domestic utensils, and whatever is reckoned among the necessaries in their simple mode of life.† In some provinces, upon the decease of a cazique or chief, a certain number of his wives, of his favourites, and of his slaves, were put to death, and interred together with him, that he might appear with the same dignity in his future station, and be waited upon by the same attendants.‡ This persuasion is so deep-rooted,

* Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 222. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 351, &c. De la Potherie, ii. 45, &c. iii. 5.

† Chronica de Cieca de Leon, c. 28. Sagard, 288. Creux. Hist. Canad. p. 91. Rochefort, Hist. des Antilles, 568. Biet, 391. De la Potherie, ii. 44. iii. 8. Blanco, Convers. de Piritu, p. 35.

‡ Dumont, Louisiane, i. 208, &c. Oviedo, lib. v. c. 3. Gomara, Hist. Gen. c. 28. P. Mart. decad. 304. Charlev.

that many of the deceased person's retainers offer themselves as voluntary victims, and court the privilege of accompanying their departed master, as an high distinction. It has been found difficult, on some occasions, to set bounds to this enthusiasm of affectionate duty, and to reduce the train of a favourite leader to such a number as the tribe could afford to spare.*

Superstition connected with devotion.

AMONG the Americans, as well as other uncivilized nations, many of the rites and observances which bear some resemblance to acts of religion, have no connexion with devotion, but proceed from a fond desire of prying into futurity. The human mind is most apt to feel, and to discover this vain curiosity, when its own powers are most feeble and uninformed. Astonished with occurrences, of which it is unable to comprehend the cause, it naturally fancies, that there is something mysterious and wonderful in their origin. Alarmed at events of which it cannot discern the issue or the consequences, it has recourse to other means of discovering them, than the exercise of its

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N. Fr. iii. 421. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 3. P. Melchior Hernandez, Memor. de Cheriqui; Coll. Orig. Papers, i. Chron. de Cieca de Leon, c. 93.

* See NOTE LXII. Page 406.

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own sagacity. Wherever superstition is so established as to form a regular system, this desire of penetrating into the secrets of futurity is connected with it. Divination becomes a religious act. Priests, as the ministers of Heaven, pretend to deliver its oracles to men. They are the only soothsayers, augurs, and magicians, who profess the sacred and important art of disclosing what is hid from other eyes.

This department belongs to their physicians.

But, among rude nations, who pay no veneration to any superintending power, and who have no established rites or ministers of religion, their curiosity to discover what is future and unknown, is cherished by a different principle, and derives strength from another alliance. As the diseases of men in the savage state are, as has been already observed, like those of the animal creation, few, but extremely violent, their impatience under what they suffer, and solicitude for the recovery of health, soon inspired them with extraordinary reverence for such as pretended to understand the nature of their maladies, and to be possessed of knowledge sufficient to preserve or deliver them from their sudden and fatal effects. These ignorant pretenders, however, were such utter strangers to the structure of the human frame, as to be equally unacquainted with the causes of its disorders, and the manner

in which they will terminate. Superstition, mingled frequently with some portion of craft, supplied what they wanted in science. They imputed the origin of diseases to supernatural influence, and prescribed or performed a variety of mysterious rites, which they gave out to be of such efficacy as to remove the most dangerous and inveterate maladies. The credulity and love of the marvellous, natural to uninformed men, favoured the deception, and prepared them to be the dupes of those impostors. Among savages, their first physicians are a kind of conjurors or wizards, who boast that they know what is past, and can foretel what is to come. Incantations, sorcery, and mummeries of diverse kinds, no less strange than frivolous, are the means which they employ to expel the imaginary causes of malignity;* and, relying upon the efficacy of these, they predict with confidence what will be the fate of their deluded patients. Thus superstition, in its earliest form, flowed from the solicitude of man to be delivered from present distress, not from his dread of evils awaiting him in a future life, and was originally ingrafted on medicine, not on religion. One of the first and most intelligent historians of

* P. Melch. Hernandez, Memorial de Cheriqui; Collect. Orig. Pap. i.

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America, was struck with this alliance between the art of divination and that of physic, among the people of Hispaniola.* But this was not peculiar to them. The *Alexis*, the *Piayas*, the *Autmoins*, or whatever was the distinguishing name of their diviners and charmers in other parts of America, were all the physicians of their respective tribes, in the same manner as the *Buhitos* of Hispaniola. As their function led them to apply to the human mind when enfeebled by sickness, and as they found it, in that season of dejection, prone to be alarmed with imaginary fears, or amused with vain hopes, they easily induced it to rely with implicit confidence on the virtue of their spells, and the certainty of their predictions.†

Gradually extends.

WHENEVER men acknowledge the reality of supernatural power and discernment in one instance, they have a propensity to admit it in others. The Americans did not long suppose the efficacy of conjuration to be confined to one subject. They had recourse to it in every situation of danger or distress. When the events of war were peculiarly disastrous, when

* Oviedo, lib. v. c. 1.

† Herrera, dec. i. lib. iii. c. 4. Osborne, Coll. ii. 860. Dumont, i. 169, &c. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 361. 364, &c. Lawson, N. Carol. 214. Ribas, Triumf. p. 17. Biet, 386. De la Potherie, ii. 35, &c.

they met with unforeseen disappointments in hunting, when inundations or drought threatened their crops with destruction, they called upon their conjurers to begin their incantations, in order to discover the causes of those calamities, or to foretel what would be their issue.* Their confidence in this delusive art gradually increased, and manifested itself in all the occurrences of life. When involved in any difficulty, or about to enter upon any transaction of moment, every individual regularly consulted the sorcerer, and depended upon his instructions to extricate him from the former, as well as to direct his conduct in the latter. Even among the rudest tribes in America, superstition appears in this form, and divination is an art in high esteem. Long before man had acquired such knowledge of a deity as inspires reverence, and leads to adoration, we observe him stretching out a presumptuous hand to draw aside that veil with which Providence kindly conceals its purposes from human knowledge; and we find him labouring with fruitless anxiety to penetrate into the mysteries of the divine administration. To discern and to worship a superintending power, is an

* Charlev. N. Fran. iii. 3. Dumont, i. 179. Fernand. Relac. de los Chequit. p. 40. Lozano, 84. Margrave, 279.

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evidence of the enlargement and maturity of the human understanding; a vain desire of prying into futurity, is the error of its infancy, and a proof of its weakness.

From this weakness proceeded likewise the faith of the Americans in dreams, their observation of omens, their attention to the chirping of birds and the cries of animals, all which they suppose to be indications of future events; and if any one of these prognostics is deemed unfavourable, they instantly abandon the pursuit of those measures on which they are most eagerly bent.*

Detached customs.

VIII. But if we would form a complete idea of the uncultivated nations of America, we must not pass unobserved some singular customs, which, though universal and characteristic, could not be reduced, with propriety, to any of the articles into which I have divided my inquiry concerning their manners.

Love of dancing.

Among savages, in every part of the globe, the love of dancing is a favourite passion. As, during a great part of their time, they languish

* Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 262. 353. Stadius ap. de Bry, iii. 120. Creuxii Hist. Canad. 84. Techo, Hist. of Parag.; Church. Coll. vi. 37. De la Potherie, iii. 6.

in a state of inactivity and indolence, without any occupation to rouse or interest them, they delight universally in a pastime which calls forth the active powers of their nature into exercise. The Spaniards, when they first visited America, were astonished at the fondness of the natives for dancing, and beheld with wonder a people, cold and unanimated in most of their other pursuits, kindle into life, and exert themselves with ardour, as often as this favourite amusement recurred. Among them, indeed, dancing ought not to be denominated an amusement. It is a serious and important occupation, which mingles in every occurrence of public or private life. If any intercourse be necessary between two American tribes, the ambassadors of the one approach in a solemn dance, and present the calumet or emblem of peace; the sachems of the other receive it with the same ceremony.* If war is denounced against an enemy, it is by a dance, expressive of the resentment which they feel, and of the vengeance which they meditate.† If the wrath of their gods is to be appeased, or their beneficence to be celebrated; if they rejoice at the birth of a child, or

* De la Potherie, Hist. ii. 17, &c. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 211. 297. La Hontan, i. 100. 137. Hennepin, Decou. 146, &c.

† Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 298. Lafitau, i. 523.

mourn the death of a friend,* they have dances appropriated to each of these situations, and suited to the different sentiments with which they are then animated. If a person is indisposed, a dance is prescribed as the most effectual means of restoring him to health; and if he himself cannot endure the fatigue of such an exercise, the physician or conjurer performs it in his name, as if the virtue of his activity could be transferred to his patient.†

All their dances are imitations of some action; and though the music by which they are regulated is extremely simple and tiresome to the ear by its dull monotony, some of their dances appear wonderfully expressive and animated. The war-dance is, perhaps, the most striking. It is the representation of a complete American campaign. The departure of the warriors from their village, their march into the enemy's country, the caution with which they encamp, the address with which they station some of their party in ambush, the manner of surprising the enemy, the noise and ferocity of the combat, the scalping of those who are slain, the seizing of prisoners, the triumphant

* Joutel, 343. Gomara, Hist. Gen. c. 196.

† Denys, Hist. Nat. 189. Brickell, 372. De la Potherie, ii. 36.

return of the conquerors, and the torture of the victims, are successively exhibited. The performers enter with such enthusiastic ardour into their several parts; their gestures, their countenance, their voice, are so wild, and so well adapted to their various situations, that Europeans can hardly believe it to be a mimic scene, or view it without emotions of fear and horror.*

But however expressive some of the American dances may be, there is one circumstance in them remarkable, and connected with the character of the race. The songs, the dances, the amusements of other nations, expressive of the sentiments which animate their hearts, are often adapted to display or excite that sensibility which mutually attaches the sexes. Among some people, such is the ardour of this passion, that love is almost the sole object of festivity and joy; and as rude nations are strangers to delicacy, and unaccustomed to disguise any emotion of their minds, their dances are often extremely wanton and indecent. Such is the *Calenda*, of which the natives of Africa are so passionately fond;† and such the feats of the

* De la Potherie, ii. 116. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 297. Lafitau, i. 523.

† Adanson, Voyage to Senegal, iii. 287. Labat, Voyag. iv. 463. Sloane, Hist. Nat. of Jam. Introd. p. 48. Fermin, Descript. de Surin. i. 139.

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dancing girls, which the Asiatics contemplate with so much avidity of desire. But, among the Americans, more cold and indifferent to their females, from causes which I have already explained, the passion of love mingles but little with their festivals and pastimes. Their songs and dances are mostly solemn and martial; they are connected with some of the serious and important affairs of life;* and having no relation to love or gallantry, are seldom common to the two sexes, but executed by the men and women apart.† If, on some occasions, the women are permitted to join in the festival, the character of the entertainment is still the same, and no movement or gesture is expressive of attachment, or encourages familiarity.‡

Passion for gaming.

An immoderate love of play, especially at games of hazard, which seems to be natural to all people unaccustomed to the occupations of regular industry, is likewise universal among the Americans. The same causes, which so often prompt persons in civilized life, who are

* Descript. of N. France; Osborne, Col. ii. 883. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 84.

† Wafer's Account of Isthmus, &c. 169. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 177. Lozano, Hist. de Parag. i. 149. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. vii. c. 8. dec. 4. lib. x. c. 4. See Note LXIII. Page 406.

‡ Barrere, Fr. Equin. p. 191.

at their ease, to have recourse to this pastime, render it the delight of the savage. The former are independent of labour, the latter do not feel the necessity of it; and as both are unemployed, they run with transport to whatever is interesting enough to stir and to agitate their minds. Hence the Americans, who at other times are so indifferent, so phlegmatic, so silent, and animated with so few desires, as soon as they engage in play become rapacious, impatient, noisy, and almost frantic with eagerness. Their furs, their domestic utensils, their clothes, their arms, are staked at the gaming-table, and when all is lost, high as their sense of independence is, in a wild emotion of despair or of hope, they will often risk their personal liberty upon a single cast.* Among several tribes, such gaming parties frequently recur, and become their most acceptable entertainment at every great festival. Superstition, which is apt to take hold of those passions which are most vigorous, frequently lends its aid to confirm and strengthen this favourite inclination. Their conjurors are accustomed to prescribe a solemn match at play, as one of the most efficacious methods of appeasing their gods, or of restoring the sick to health.†

* Charlev. N. Fran. iii. 261. 318. Lafitau, ii. 338, &c. Ribas, Triumf. 13. Brickell, 385.

† Charlev. N. Fran. iii. 262.

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and for drinking.

FROM causes similar to those which render them fond of play, the Americans are extremely addicted to drunkenness. It seems to have been one of the first exertions of human ingenuity to discover some composition of an intoxicating quality; and there is hardly any nation so rude, or so destitute of invention, as not to have succeeded in this fatal research. The most barbarous of the American tribes have been so unfortunate as to attain this art; and even those which are so deficient in knowledge, as to be unacquainted with the method of giving an inebriating strength to liquors by fermentation, can accomplish the same end by other means. The people of the islands of North America, and of California, used, for this purpose, the smoke of tobacco, drawn up with a certain instrument into the nostrils, the fumes of which ascending to the brain, they felt all the transports and phrenzy of intoxication.* In almost every other part of the New World, the natives possessed the art of extracting an intoxicating liquor from maize or the manioc root, the same substances which they convert into bread. The operation by which they effect this nearly resembles the common one of brewing, but with this difference, that in place of

* Oviedo, Hist. ap. Ramus. iii. 113. Venegas, i. 68. Naufrag. de Cabeza de Baca, cap. 26. See NOTE LXIV. Page 406.

yest, they use a nauseous infusion of a certain quantity of maize or manioc chewed by their women. The saliva excites a vigorous fermentation, and in a few days the liquor becomes fit for drinking. It is not disagreeable to the taste, and when swallowed in large quantities, is of an intoxicating quality.* This is the general beverage of the Americans, which they distinguish by various names, and for which they feel such a violent and insatiable desire, as it is not easy either to conceive or describe. Among polished nations, where a succession of various functions and amusements keeps the mind in continual occupation, the desire for strong drink is regulated in a great measure by the climate, and increases or diminishes according to the variations of its temperature. In warm regions, the delicate and sensible frame of the inhabitants does not require the stimulation of fermented liquors. In colder countries, the constitution of the natives, more robust and more sluggish, stands in need of generous liquors to quicken and animate it. But among savages, the desire of something that is of power to intoxicate, is in every situation the same. All the people of America, if we except some small tribes near the Straits of Magellan, whether natives of the torrid zone, or inhabi-

* Stadius ap. de Bry, iii. 111. Lery, ibid. 175.

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tants of its more temperate regions, or placed by a harder fate in the severe climates towards its northern or southern extremity, appear to be equally under the dominion of this appetite.* Such a similarity of taste, among people in such different situations, must be ascribed to the influence of some moral cause, and cannot be considered as the effect of any physical or constitutional want. While engaged in war or in the chase, the savage is often in the most interesting situations, and all the powers of his nature are roused to the most vigorous exertions. But those animating scenes are succeeded by long intervals of repose, during which the warrior meets with nothing that he deems of sufficient dignity or importance to merit his attention. He languishes and mopes in this season of indolence. The posture of his body is an emblem of the state of his mind. In one climate, cowering over the fire in his cabin; in another, stretched under the shade of some tree, he dozes away his time in sleep, or in an unthinking joyless inactivity, not far removed from it. As strong liquors awake him from this torpid state, give a brisker mo-

* Gumilla, i. 257. Lozano, Descr. del Gran Chaco, 56. 103. Ribas, 8. Ulloa, i. 249. 337. Marchais, iv. 436. Fernandez, Mission. de los Chequit. 35. Barrere, p. 203. Blanco, Convers. de Piritu, 31.

tion to his spirits, and enliven him more thoroughly than either dancing or gaming, his love of them is excessive. A savage, when not engaged in action, is a pensive melancholy animal; but as soon as he tastes, or has a prospect of tasting, the intoxicating draught, he becomes gay and frolicsome.* Whatever be the occasion or pretext on which the Americans assemble, the meeting always terminates in a debauch. Many of their festivals have no other object, and they welcome the return of them with transports of joy. As they are not accustomed to restrain any appetite, they set no bounds to this. The riot often continues without intermission several days; and whatever may be the fatal effects of their excess, they never cease from drinking as long as one drop of liquor remains. The persons of greatest eminence, the most distinguished warriors, and the chiefs most renowned for their wisdom, have no greater command of themselves than the most obscure member of the community. Their eagerness for present enjoyment renders them blind to its fatal consequences; and those very men, who in other situations seem to possess a force of mind more than human, are in this instance inferior to children in foresight, as well as consideration,

* Melendez Tesoros Verdad. iii. 369.

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and mere slaves of brutal appetite.* When their passions, naturally strong, are heightened and inflamed by drink, they are guilty of the most enormous outrages, and the festivity seldom concludes without deeds of violence or bloodshed.†

But, amidst this wild debauch, there is one circumstance remarkable; the women, in most of the American tribes, are not permitted to partake of it.‡ Their province is to prepare the liquor, to serve it about to the guests, and to take care of their husbands and friends, when their reason is overpowered. This exclusion of the women from an enjoyment so highly valued by savages, may be justly considered as a mark of their inferiority, and as an additional evidence of that contempt with which they were treated in the New World. The people of North America, when first discovered, were not acquainted with any intoxicating drink; but as the Europeans early found it their interest to supply them with spirituous liquors, drunkenness soon became as universal among them as among their countrymen to the south; and their women having

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* Ribas, 9. Ulloa, i. 338.

† Lettr. Edif. ii. 178. Torquemada, Mon. Ind. i. 339.

‡ See Note LXV. Page 407.

acquired this new taste, indulge it with as little decency and moderation as the men.*

Put to death the aged and incurable.

It were endless to enumerate all the detached customs which have excited the wonder of travellers in America; but I cannot omit one seemingly as singular as any that has been mentioned. When their parents and other relations become old, or labour under any distemper which their slender knowledge of the healing art cannot remove, the Americans cut short their days with a violent hand, in order to be relieved from the burden of supporting and tending them. This practice prevailed among the ruder tribes in every part of the continent, from Hudson's Bay to the river De la Plata; and however shocking it may be to those sentiments of tenderness and attachment, which, in civilized life, we are apt to consider as congenial with our frame, the condition of man in the savage state leads and reconciles him to it. The same hardships and difficulty of procuring subsistence, which deter savages, in some cases, from rearing their children, prompt them to destroy the aged and infirm. The declining state of the one is as helpless as the infancy of the other. The former are no

* Hutchinson, Hist. of Massachus. 469. Lafitau, ii. 125. Sagard, 146.

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less unable than the latter to perform the functions that belong to a warrior or hunter, or to endure those various distresses in which savages are so often involved, by their own want of foresight and industry. Their relations feel this; and, incapable of attending to the wants or weaknesses of others, their impatience under an additional burden prompts them to extinguish that life which they find it difficult to sustain. This is not regarded as a deed of cruelty, but as an act of mercy. An American, broken with years and infirmities, conscious that he can no longer depend on the aid of those around him, places himself contentedly in his grave; and it is by the hands of his children or nearest relations that the thong is pulled, or the blow inflicted, which releases him for ever from the sorrows of life.*

General estimate of their character.

IX. After contemplating the rude American tribes in such various lights; after taking a view of their customs and manners from so many different stations, nothing remains but to form a general estimate of their character, compared with that of more polished nations. A human being, as he comes originally from the hand of nature, is everywhere the same.

* Cassani, Hist. de N. Reyno de Gran. p. 300. Piso, p. 6. Ellis, Voy. 191. Gumilla, i. 333.

At his first appearance in the state of infancy, whether it be among the rudest savages or in the most civilized nation, we can discern no quality which marks any distinction or superiority. The capacity of improvement seems to be the same; and the talents he may afterwards acquire, as well as the virtues he may be rendered capable of exercising, depend, in a great measure, upon the state of society in which he is placed. To this state his mind naturally accommodates itself, and from it receives discipline and culture. In proportion to the wants which it accustoms a human being to feel, and the functions in which these engage him, his intellectual powers are called forth. According to the connexions which it establishes between him and the rest of his species, the affections of his heart are exerted. It is only by attending to this great principle, that we can discover what is the character of man in every different period of his progress.

Intellectual powers.

If we apply it to savage life, and measure the attainments of the human mind in that state by this standard, we shall find, according to an observation which I have already made, that the intellectual powers of man must be extremely limited in their operations. They are confined within the narrow sphere of what he deems necessary for supplying his own wants. Whatever has not some relation to these, nei-

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ther attracts his attention, nor is the object of his inquiries. But however narrow the bounds may be within which the knowledge of a savage is circumscribed, he possesses thoroughly that small portion which he has attained. It was not communicated to him by formal instruction; he does not attend to it as a matter of mere speculation and curiosity; it is the result of his own observation, the fruit of his own experience, and accommodated to his condition and exigencies. While employed in the active occupations of war or of hunting, he often finds himself in difficult and perilous situations, from which the efforts of his own sagacity must extricate him. He is frequently engaged in measures, where every step depends upon his own ability to decide; where he must rely solely upon his own penetration to discern the dangers to which he is exposed, and upon his own wisdom in providing against them. In consequence of this, he feels the knowledge which he possesses, and the efforts which he makes; and, either in deliberation or action, rests on himself alone.

Political talents.

As the talents of individuals are exercised and improved by such exertions, much political wisdom is said to be displayed in conducting the affairs of their small communities. The council of old men in an American tribe, deliberating upon its interests, and determin-

ing with respect to peace or war, has been compared to the senate in more polished republics. The proceedings of the former, we are told, are often no less formal and sagacious than those of the latter. Great political wisdom is exhibited in pondering the various measures proposed, and in balancing their probable advantages against the evils of which they may be productive. Much address and eloquence are employed by the leaders, who aspire at acquiring such confidence with their countrymen as to have an ascendant in those assemblies.* But, among savage tribes, the field for displaying political talents cannot be extensive. Where the idea of private property is incomplete, and no criminal jurisdiction is established, there is hardly any function of internal government to exercise. Where there is no commerce, and scarcely any intercourse among separate tribes; where enmity is implacable, and hostilities are carried on almost without intermission; there will be few points of public concern to adjust with their neighbours; and that department of their affairs which may be denominated foreign, cannot be so intricate as to require much refined policy in conducting it. Where individuals are so thoughtless and improvident as seldom to take effectual

* Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 269, &c.

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precautions for self-preservation, it is vain to expect that public measures and deliberations will be regulated by the contemplation of remote events. It is the genius of savages to act from the impulse of present passion. They have neither foresight nor temper to form complicated arrangements with respect to their future conduct. The consultations of the Americans, indeed, are so frequent, and their negociations are so many,* and so long protracted, as to give their proceedings an extraordinary aspect of wisdom. But this is not owing so much to the depth of their schemes, as to the coldness and phlegm of their temper, which render them slow in determining.† If we except the celebrated league that united the Five Nations in Canada into a federal republic, which shall be considered in its proper place, we can discern few such traces of political wisdom among the rude American tribes, as discover any great degree of foresight, or extent of intellectual abilities. Even among them, we shall find public measures more frequently directed by the impetuous ferocity of their youth, than regulated by the experience and wisdom of their old men.

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* See NOTE LXVI. Page 407.

† Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 271.

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Degree of affection.

As the condition of man in the savage state is unfavourable to the progress of the understanding, it has a tendency likewise, in some respects, to check the exercise of affection, and to render the heart contracted. The strongest feeling in the mind of a savage, is a sense of his own independence. He has sacrificed so small a portion of his natural liberty by becoming a member of society, that he remains, in a great degree, the sole master of his own actions.* He often takes his resolutions alone, without consulting, or feeling any connexion with the persons around him. In many of his operations, he stands as much detached from the rest of his species, as if he had formed no union with them. Conscious how little he depends upon other men, he is apt to view them with a careless indifference. Even the force of his mind contributes to increase this unconcern; and as he looks not beyond himself in deliberating with respect to the part which he should act, his solicitude about the consequences of it seldom extends farther. He pursues his own career, and indulges his own fancy, without inquiring or regarding whether what he does be agreeable or offensive to others, whether they may derive benefit or receive hurt from it. Hence the ungovernable caprice

* Fernandez, Mission. de los Chequit. 33.

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of savages, their impatience under any species of restraint, their inability to suppress or moderate any inclination, the scorn or neglect with which they receive advice, their high estimation of themselves, and their contempt of other men. Among them, the pride of independence produces almost the same effects with interestedness in a more advanced state of society: it refers every thing to a man himself; it leads him to be indifferent about the manner in which his actions may affect other men; and renders the gratification of his own wishes the measure and end of conduct.

Hardness of heart.

To the same cause may be imputed the hardness of heart, and insensibility, remarkable in all savage nations. Their minds, roused only by strong emotions, are little susceptible of gentle, delicate, or tender affections.* Their union is so incomplete, that each individual acts as if he retained all his natural rights entire and undiminished. If a favour is conferred upon him, or any beneficial service is performed on his account, he receives it with much satisfaction, because it contributes to his enjoyment; but this sentiment extends not beyond himself; it excites no sense of obligation; he neither feels gratitude, nor thinks of

* Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 309.

making any return.* Even among persons the most closely connected, the exchange of those good offices which strengthen attachment, mollify the heart, and sweeten the intercourse of life, is not frequent. The high ideas of independence among the Americans nourish a sullen reserve, which keeps them at a distance from each other. The nearest relations are mutually afraid to make any demand, or to solicit any service,† lest it should be considered by the other as imposing a burden, or laying a restraint upon his will.

Insensibility.

I HAVE already remarked the influence of this hard unfeeling temper upon domestic life, with respect to the connexion between husband and wife, as well as that between parents and children. Its effects are no less conspicuous, in the performance of those mutual offices of tenderness which the infirmities of our nature frequently exact. Among some tribes, when any of their number are seized with any violent disease, they are generally abandoned by all around them, who, careless of their recovery, fly in the utmost consternation from the supposed danger of infection.‡

* Oviedo, Hist. lib. xvi. c. 2. See NOTE LXVII. Page 408.

† De la Potherie, iii. 28.

‡ Lettre de P. Cataneo ap. Muratori Christian. i. 309. Tertre, ii. 410. Lozano, 100. Herrera, dec. 4. lib. viii.

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But even where they are not thus deserted, the cold indifference with which they are attended can afford them little consolation. No look of sympathy, no soothing expressions, no officious services, contribute to alleviate the distress of the sufferers, or to make them forget what they endure.* Their nearest relations will often refuse to submit to the smallest inconveniency, or to part with the least trifle, however much it may tend to their accommodation or relief.† So little is the breast of a savage susceptible of those sentiments which prompt men to that feeling attention which mitigates the calamities of human life, that, in some provinces of America, the Spaniards have found it necessary to enforce the common duties of humanity by positive laws, and to oblige husbands and wives, parents and children, under severe penalties, to take care of each other during their sickness.‡ The same harshness of temper is still more conspicuous in their treatment of the animal creation. Prior to their intercourse with the people of Europe, the North Americans had some tame dogs, which accompanied them in their hunting ex-

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c. 5. dec. 5. lib. iv. c. 2. Falkner's Descript. of Patagonia, 98.

* Gumilla, i. 329. Lozano, 100.

† Garcia Origen, &c. 90. Herrera, dec. 4. lib. viii. c. 5.

‡ Cogulludo, Hist. de Yucathan, p. 300.

cursions, and served them with all the ardour and fidelity peculiar to the species. But, instead of that fond attachment which the hunter naturally feels towards those useful companions of his toils, they requite their services with neglect, seldom feed, and never caress them.* In other provinces the Americans have become acquainted with the domestic animals of Europe, and avail themselves of their service; but it is universally observed that they always treat them harshly,† and never employ any method, either for breaking or managing them, but force and cruelty. In every part of the deportment of man in his savage state, whether towards his equals of the human species, or towards the animals below him, we recognize the same character, and trace the operations of a mind intent on its own gratifications, and regulated by its own caprice, with little attention or sensibility to the sentiments and feelings of the beings around him.

Taciturnity.

After explaining how unfavourable the savage state is to the cultivation of the understanding, and to the improvement of the heart, I should not have thought it necessary to mention what may be deemed its lesser defects, if

* Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 119. 337.

† Ulloa, Notic. American. 312.

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the character of nations, as well as of individuals, were not often more distinctly marked by circumstances apparently trivial than by those of greater moment. A savage, frequently placed in situations of danger and distress, depending on himself alone, and wrapped up in his own thoughts and schemes, is a serious melancholy animal. His attention to others is small. The range of his own ideas is narrow. Hence that taciturnity which is so disgusting to men accustomed to the open intercourse of social conversation. When they are not engaged in action, the Americans often sit whole days in one posture, without opening their lips.* When they go forth to war, or to the chase, they usually march in a line at some distance from one another, and without exchanging a word. The same profound silence is observed when they row together in a canoe.† It is only when they are animated by intoxicating liquors, or roused by the jollity of the festival and dance, that they become gay and conversible.

Cunning.

To the same causes may be imputed the refined cunning with which they form and execute their schemes. Men who are not habituated to a liberal communication of their own

* Voyage de Bouguer, 102. † Charlev. iii. 340.

sentiments and wishes, are apt to be so distrustful, as to place little confidence in others, and to have recourse to an insidious craft in accomplishing their own purposes. In civilized life, those persons who, by their situations, have but a few objects of pursuit on which their minds incessantly dwell, are most remarkable for low artifice in carrying on their little projects. Among savages, whose views are equally confined, and their attention no less persevering, those circumstances must operate still more powerfully, and gradually accustom them to a disingenuous subtlety in all their transactions. The force of this is increased by habits which they acquire in carrying on the two most interesting operations wherein they are engaged. With them war is a system of craft, in which they trust for success to stratagem more than to open force, and have their invention continually on the stretch to circumvent and surprise their enemies. As hunters, it is their constant object to ensnare, in order that they may destroy. Accordingly, art and cunning have been universally observed as distinguishing characteristics of all savages. The people of the rude tribes of America are remarkable for their artifice and duplicity. Impenetrably secret in forming their measures, they pursue them with a patient undeviating attention; and there is no refinement of dissimulation which they cannot employ, in order

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to ensure success. The natives of Peru were engaged above thirty years, in concerting the plan of that insurrection which took place under the vice-royalty of the Marquis de Villa-Garcia; and though it was communicated to a great number of persons, in all different ranks, no indication of it ever transpired during that long period; no man betrayed his trust, or by an unguarded look, or rash word, gave rise to any suspicion of what was intended.* The dissimulation and craft of individuals is no less remarkable than that of nations. When set upon deceiving, they wrap themselves up so artificially, that it is impossible to penetrate into their intentions, or to detect their designs.†

Virtues.

But if there be defects or vices peculiar to the savage state, there are likewise virtues which it inspires, and good qualities to the exercise of which it is friendly. The bonds of society sit so loose upon the members of the more rude American tribes, that they hardly feel any restraint. Hence the spirit of independence, which is the pride of a savage, and which he considers as the unalienable prerogative of man. Incapable of controul, and disdaining to acknowledge any superior, his mind,

Independent spirit.

* Voyage de Ulloa, ii. 309.

† Gumilla, i. 162. Charlev. iii. 109.

though limited in its powers, and erring in many of its pursuits, acquires such elevation by the consciousness of its own freedom, that he acts on some occasions with astonishing force, and perseverance, and dignity.

Fortitude.

As independence nourishes this high spirit among savages, the perpetual wars in which they are engaged call it forth into action. Such long intervals of tranquillity as are frequent in polished societies, are unknown in the savage state. Their enmities, as I have observed, are implacable and immortal. The valour of the young men is never allowed to rust in inaction. The hatchet is always in their hand, either for attack or defence. Even in their hunting excursions, they must be on their guard against surprise from the hostile tribes by which they are surrounded. Accustomed to continual alarms, they grow familiar with danger; courage becomes an habitual virtue, resulting naturally from their situation, and strengthened by constant exertions. The mode of displaying fortitude may not be the same in small and rude communities, as in more powerful and civilized states. Their system of war, and standard of valour, may be formed upon different principles, but in no situation does the human mind rise more superior to the sense of danger, or the dread of death, than in its most simple and uncultivated state.

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Attachment to their community.

ANOTHER virtue remarkable among savages, is attachment to the community of which they are members. From the nature of their political union, one might expect this tie to be extremely feeble. But there are circumstances which render the influence, even of their loose mode of association, very powerful. The American tribes are small: combined against their neighbours, in prosecution of ancient enmities, or in avenging recent injuries, their interests and operations are neither numerous nor complex. These are objects, which the uncultivated understanding of a savage can comprehend. His heart is capable of forming connexions which are so little diffused. He assents with warmth to public measures, dictated by passions similar to those which direct his own conduct. Hence the ardour with which individuals undertake the most perilous service, when the community deems it necessary. Hence their fierce and deep-rooted antipathy to the public enemies. Hence their zeal for the honour of their tribe, and that love of their country, which prompts them to brave danger that it may triumph, and to endure the most exquisite torments, without a groan, that it may not be disgraced.

Satisfaction with their own condition.

THUS, in every situation where a human being can be placed, even in the most unfavourable, there are virtues which peculiarly

belong to it; there are affections which it calls forth; there is a species of happiness which it yields. Nature, with most beneficent intention, conciliates and forms the mind to its condition; the ideas and wishes of man extend not beyond that state of society to which he is habituated. What it presents as objects of contemplation or enjoyment, fills and satisfies his mind, and he can hardly conceive any other mode of life to be pleasant, or even tolerable. The Tartar, accustomed to roam over extensive plains, and to subsist on the product of his herds, imprecates upon his enemy, as the greatest of all curses, that he may be condemned to reside in one place, and to be nourished with the top of a weed. The rude Americans, fond of their own pursuits, and satisfied with their own lot, are equally unable to comprehend the intention or utility of the various accommodations, which, in more polished society, are deemed essential to the comfort of life. Far from complaining of their own situation, or viewing that of men in a more improved state with admiration or envy, they regard themselves as the standard of excellence, as beings the best entitled, as well as the most perfectly qualified, to enjoy real happiness. Unaccustomed to any restraint upon their will or their actions, they behold with amazement the inequality of rank, and the subordination which takes place in civilized

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life, and consider the voluntary submission of one man to another, as a renunciation, no less base than unaccountable, of the first distinction of humanity. Void of foresight, as well as free from care themselves, and delighted with that state of indolent security, they wonder at the anxious precautions, the unceasing industry, and complicated arrangements of Europeans, in guarding against distant evils, or providing for future wants; and they often exclaim against their preposterous folly, in thus multiplying the troubles and increasing the labour of life.* This preference of their own manners is conspicuous on every occasion. Even the names by which the various nations wish to be distinguished, are assumed from this idea of their own pre-eminence. The appellation which the Iroquois give to themselves is, *the chief of men.*† *Caraibe*, the original name of the fierce inhabitants of the Windward Islands, signifies, *the warlike people.*‡ The Cherokees, from an idea of their own superiority, call the Europeans *Nothings*, or *the accursed race*, and assume to themselves the name of *the beloved people.*§ The same principle regulated the notions of the other Ame-

* Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 308. Lahontan, ii. 97.

† Coldan, i. 3.

‡ Rochefort, Hist. des Antilles, 455.

§ Adair, Hist. of Amer. Indians, p. 32.

ricans concerning the Europeans; for although, at first, they were filled with astonishment at their arts, and with dread of their power, they soon came to abate their estimation of men whose maxims of life were so different from their own. Hence they called them *the froth of the sea, men without father or mother.* They supposed, that either they had no country of their own, and therefore invaded that which belonged to others;* or that, being destitute of the necessaries of life at home, they were obliged to roam over the ocean, in order to rob such as were more amply provided.

Men, thus satisfied with their condition, are far from any inclination to relinquish their own habits, or to adopt those of civilized life. The transition is too violent to be suddenly made. Even where endeavours have been used to wean a savage from his own customs, and to render the accommodations of polished society familiar to him; even where he has been allowed to taste of those pleasures, and has been honoured with those distinctions, which are the chief objects of our desire, he droops and languishes under the restraint of laws and forms, he seizes the first opportunity of breaking loose from them, and returns with transport

* Benzon. Hist. Novi Orbis, lib. iii. c. 21.

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to the forest or the wild, where he can enjoy a careless and uncontrolled freedom.*

THUS I have finished a laborious delineation of the character and manners of the uncivilized tribes scattered over the vast continent of America. In this, I aspire not at rivalling the great masters who have painted and adorned savage life, either in boldness of design, or in the glow and beauty of their colouring. I am satisfied with the more humble merit of having persisted with patient industry, in viewing my subject in many various lights, and collecting from the most accurate observers such detached, and often minute features, as might enable me to exhibit a portrait that resembles the original.

General caution with respect to this inquiry.

BEFORE I close this part of my work, one observation more is necessary, in order to justify the conclusions which I have formed, or to prevent the mistakes into which such as examine them may fall. In contemplating the inhabitants of a country so widely extended as America, great attention should be paid to the diversity of climates under which they are placed. The influence of this I have pointed out with respect to several important particu-

* Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 322.

lars which have been the object of research; but even where it has not been mentioned, it ought not to be overlooked. The provinces of America are of such different temperament, that this alone is sufficient to constitute a distinction between their inhabitants. In every part of the earth where man exists, the power of climates operates, with decisive influence, upon his condition and character. In those countries which approach near to the extremes of heat or cold, this influence is so conspicuous as to strike every eye. Whether we consider man merely as an animal, or as being endowed with rational powers which fit him for activity and speculation, we shall find that he has uniformly attained the greatest perfection of which his nature is capable, in the temperate regions of the globe. There his constitution is most vigorous, his organs most acute, and his form most beautiful. There, too, he possesses a superior extent of capacity, greater fertility of imagination, more enterprising courage, and a sensibility of heart which gives birth to desires not only ardent but persevering. In this favourite situation he has displayed the utmost efforts of his genius, in literature, in policy, in commerce, in war, and in all the arts which improve or embellish life.*

* Dr Ferguson's Essay on the History of Civil Society, part iii. c. 1.

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This powerful operation of climate is felt most sensibly by rude nations, and produces greater effects than in societies more improved. The talents of civilized men are continually exerted in rendering their own condition more comfortable; and, by their ingenuity and inventions, they can, in a great measure, supply the defects, and guard against the inconveniences of any climate. But the improvident savage is affected by every circumstance peculiar to his situation. He takes no precaution either to mitigate or improve it. Like a plant or an animal, he is formed by the climate under which he is placed, and feels the full force of its influence.

In surveying the rude nations of America, this natural distinction between the inhabitants of the temperate and torrid zones is very remarkable. They may, accordingly, be divided into two great classes. The one comprehends all the North Americans, from the river St Laurence to the Gulf of Mexico, together with the people of Chili, and a few small tribes towards the extremity of the southern continent. To the other belong all the inhabitants of the islands, and those settled in the various provinces which extend from the Isthmus of Darien almost to the southern confines of Brasil, along the east side of the Andes. In the former, which comprehends all the regions

of the temperate zone that in America are inhabited, the human species appears manifestly to be more perfect. The natives are more robust, more active, more intelligent, and more courageous. They possess, in the most eminent degree, that force of mind and love of independence, which I have pointed out as the chief virtues of man in his savage state. They have defended their liberty with persevering fortitude against the Europeans, who subdued the other rude nations of America with the greatest ease. The natives of the temperate zone are the only people in the New World who are indebted for their freedom to their own valour. The North Americans, though long encompassed by three formidable European powers, still retain part of their original possessions, and continue to exist as independent nations. The people of Chili, though early invaded, still maintain a gallant contest with the Spaniards, and have set bounds to their encroachments; whereas, in the warmer regions, men are more feeble in their frame, less vigorous in the efforts of their mind, of a gentle but dastardly spirit, more enslaved by pleasure, and more sunk in indolence. Accordingly, it is in the torrid zone that the Europeans have most completely established their dominion over America; the most fertile and desirable provinces in it are subjected to their yoke; and if several tribes there

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still enjoy independence, it is either because they have never been attacked by an enemy already satiated with conquest, and possessed of larger territories than he was able to occupy, or because they have been saved from oppression by their remote and inaccessible situation.

Conspicuous as this distinction may appear between the inhabitants of those different regions, it is not, however, universal. Moral and political causes, as I have formerly observed, affect the disposition and character of individuals, as well as nations, still more powerfully than the influence of climate. There are, accordingly, some tribes, in various parts of the torrid zone, possessed of courage, high spirit, and the love of independence, in a degree hardly inferior to the natives of more temperate climates. We are too little acquainted with the history of those people, to be able to trace the several circumstances in their progress and condition, to which they are indebted for this remarkable pre-eminence. The fact, nevertheless, is certain. As early as the first voyage of Columbus, he received information that several of the islands were inhabited by the *Caribbees*, a fierce race of men, nowise resembling their feeble and timid neighbours. In his second expedition to the New World, he found this information to be just,

and was himself a witness of their intrepid valour.* The same character they have maintained invariably in all subsequent contests with the people of Europe;† and, even in our own times, we have seen them make a gallant stand in defence of the last territory which the rapacity of their invaders had left in their possession.‡ Some nations in Brasil were no less eminent for vigour of mind and bravery in war.§ The people of the Isthmus of Darien boldly met the Spaniards in the field, and frequently repelled those formidable invaders.‖ Other instances might be produced. It is not by attending to any single cause or principle, how powerful and extensive soever its influence may appear, that we can explain the actions, or account for the character of men. Even the law of climate, more universal, perhaps, in its operation than any that affects the human species, cannot be applied, in judging of their conduct, without many exceptions.

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* Life of Columbus, c. 47, 48. See NOTE LXVIII. Page 408.

† Rochefort, Hist. des Antilles, 531.

‡ See NOTE LXIX. Page 409.

§ Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 207, &c.

‖ Herrera, dec. 1. lib. x. c. 15, &c.; dec. 2. passim.

THE

HISTORY

OF

AMERICA.

BOOK V.

1518. Preparations of Velasquez for invading New Spain.

WHEN Grijalva returned to Cuba, he found the armament destined to attempt the conquest of that rich country which he had discovered, almost complete. Not only ambition, but avarice, had urged Velasquez to hasten his preparations; and having such a prospect of gratifying both, he had advanced considerable sums out of his private fortune towards defraying the expense of the expedition. At the same time, he exerted his influence as governor, in engaging the most distinguished persons in the colony to undertake the service.*

* See NOTE LXX. Page 410.

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At a time when the spirit of the Spanish nation was adventurous to excess, a number of soldiers, eager to embark in any daring enterprise, soon appeared. But it was not so easy to find a person qualified to take the command in an expedition of so much importance; and the character of Velasquez, who had the right of nomination, greatly increased the difficulty of the choice. Though of most aspiring ambition, and not destitute of talents for government, he possessed neither such courage, nor such vigour and activity of mind, as to undertake in person the conduct of the armament which he was preparing. In this embarrassing situation, he formed the chimerical scheme, not only of achieving great exploits by a deputy, but of securing to himself the glory of conquests which were to be made by another. In the execution of this plan, he fondly aimed at reconciling contradictions. He was solicitous to choose a commander of intrepid resolution, and of superior abilities, because he knew these to be requisite in order to ensure success; but, at the same time, from the jealousy natural to little minds, he wished this person to be of a spirit so tame and obsequious, as to be entirely dependent on his will. But when he came to apply those ideas in forming an opinion concerning the several officers who occurred to his thoughts as worthy of being entrusted with the command, he

soon perceived that it was impossible to find such incompatible qualities united in one character. Such as were distinguished for courage and talents, were too high-spirited to be passive instruments in his hands. Those who appeared more gentle and tractable, were destitute of capacity, and unequal to the charge. This augmented his perplexity and his fears. He deliberated long, and with much solicitude, and was still wavering in his choice, when Amador de Lares, the royal treasurer in Cuba, and Andres Duero, his own secretary, the two persons in whom he chiefly confided, were encouraged by this irresolution to propose a new candidate, and they supported their recommendation with such assiduity and address, that, no less fatally for Velasquez than happily for their country, it proved successful.*

He appoints Cortes commander.

THE man whom they pointed out to him was Fernando Cortes. He was born at Medellin, a small town in Estremadura, in the year one thousand four hundred and eighty-five, and descended from a family of noble blood, but of very moderate fortune. Being originally destined by his parents to the study of law, as the most likely method of bettering his con-

* B. Diaz, c. 19. Gomara, Cron. c. 7. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iii. c. 11.

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dition, he was sent early to the university of Salamanca, where he imbibed some tincture of learning. But he was soon disgusted with an academic life, which did not suit his ardent and restless genius, and retired to Medellin, where he gave himself up entirely to active sports and martial exercises. At this period of life, he was so impetuous, so overbearing, and so dissipated, that his father was glad to comply with his inclination, and send him abroad as an adventurer in arms. There were in that age two conspicuous theatres, on which such of the Spanish youth as courted military glory might display their valour; one in Italy, under the command of the Great Captain; the other in the New World. Cortes preferred the former, but was prevented by indisposition from embarking with a reinforcement of troops sent to Naples. Upon this disappointment he turned his views towards America, whether he was allured by the prospect of the advantages which he might derive from the patronage of Ovando,* the governor of Hispaniola, who was his kinsman. When he landed at St Domingo in one thousand five hundred and four, his reception was such as equalled his most sanguine hopes, and he was employed by the governor in several honourable and lucrative stations.

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* See NOTE LXXI. Page 415.

These, however, did not satisfy his ambition; and in the year one thousand five hundred and eleven he obtained permission to accompany Diego Velasquez in his expedition to Cuba. In this service he distinguished himself so much, that notwithstanding some violent contests with Velasquez, occasioned by trivial events unworthy of remembrance, he was at length taken into favour, and received an ample concession of lands and of Indians, the recompense usually bestowed upon adventurers in the New World.* 1518.

THOUGH Cortes had not hitherto acted in high command, he had displayed such qualities in several scenes of difficulty and danger, as raised universal expectation, and turned the eyes of his countrymen towards him, as one capable of performing great things. The turbulence of youth, as soon as he found objects and occupations suited to the ardour of his mind, gradually subsided, and settled into a habit of regular indefatigable activity. The impetuosity of his temper, when he came to act with his equals, insensibly abated, by being kept under restraint, and mellowed into a cordial soldierly frankness. These qualities were accompanied with calm prudence in concert-

* Gomara, Cron. c. 1, 2, 3.

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ing his schemes, with persevering vigour in executing them, and with what is peculiar to superior genius, the art of gaining the confidence and governing the minds of men. To all which were added the inferior accomplishments that strike the vulgar, and command their respect; a graceful person, a winning aspect, extraordinary address in martial exercises, and a constitution of such vigour as to be capable of enduring any fatigue.

As soon as Cortes was mentioned to Velasquez by his two confidants, he flattered himself that he had at length found what he had hitherto sought in vain, a man with talents for command, but not an object for jealousy. Neither the rank nor the fortune of Cortes, as he imagined, were such that he could aspire at independence. He had reason to believe that by his own readiness to bury ancient animosities in oblivion, as well as his liberality in conferring several recent favours, he had already gained the good-will of Cortes, and hoped, by this new and unexpected mark of confidence, that he might attach him for ever to his interest.

Soon becomes jealous of him. Oct. 23.

CORTES, receiving his commission with the warmest expressions of respect and gratitude to the governor, immediately erected his standard before his own house, appeared in a mili-

tary dress, and assumed all the ensigns of his new dignity. His utmost influence and activity were exerted in persuading many of his friends to engage in the service, and in urging forward the preparations for the voyage. All his own funds, together with what money he could raise by mortgaging his lands and Indians, were expended in purchasing military stores and provisions, or in supplying the wants of such of his officers as were unable to equip themselves in a manner suited to their rank.* Inoffensive, and even laudable as this conduct was, his disappointed competitors were malicious enough to give it a turn to his disadvantage. They represented him as aiming already, with little disguise, at establishing an independent authority over his troops, and endeavouring to secure their respect or love by his ostentatious and interested liberality. They reminded Velasquez of his former dissensions with the man in whom he now reposed so much confidence, and foretold that Cortes would be more apt to avail himself of the power which the governor was inconsiderately putting in his hands, to avenge past injuries, than to requite recent obligations. These insinuations made such impression upon the suspicious mind of Velasquez, that Cortes soon observed some

* See NOTE LXXII. Page 415.

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symptoms of a growing alienation and distrust in his behaviour, and was advised by Lares and Duero to hasten his departure, before these should become so confirmed as to break out with open violence. Fully sensible of this danger, he urged forward his preparations with such rapidity, that he set sail from St Jago de Cuba on the eighteenth of November, Velasquez accompanying him to the shore, and taking leave of him with an appearance of perfect friendship and confidence, though he had secretly given it in charge to some of Cortes's officers, to keep a watchful eye upon every part of their commander's conduct.*

Endeavours to deprive him of his commission,

Cortes proceeded to Trinidad, a small settlement on the same side of the island, where he was joined by several adventurers, and received a supply of provisions and military stores, of which his stock was still very incomplete. He had hardly left St Jago, when the jealousy which had been working in the breast of Velasquez grew so violent, that it was impossible to suppress it. The armament was no longer under his own eye and direction; and he felt, that as his power over it ceased, that of Cortes would become more absolute. Imagination now aggravated every circumstance

* Gomara, Cron. c. 7. B. Diaz, c. 20.

which had formerly excited suspicion: the rivals of Cortes industriously threw in reflections which increased his fears; and with no less art than malice they called superstition to their aid, employing the predictions of an astrologer in order to complete the alarm. All these, by their united operation, produced the desired effect. Velasquez repented bitterly of his own imprudence, in having committed a trust of so much importance to a person whose fidelity appeared so doubtful, and hastily despatched instructions to Trinidad, empowering Verdugo, the chief magistrate there, to deprive Cortes of his commission. But Cortes had already made such progress in gaining the esteem and confidence of his troops, that, finding officers as well as soldiers equally zealous to support his authority, he soothed or intimidated Verdugo, and was permitted to depart from Trinidad without molestation.

and to lay him under arrest.

From Trinidad Cortes sailed for the Havana, in order to raise more soldiers, and to complete the victualling of his fleet. There several persons of distinction entered into the service, and engaged to supply what provisions were still wanting; but as it was necessary to allow them some time for performing what they had promised, Velasquez, sensible that he ought no longer to rely on a man of whom he had so openly discovered his distrust, availed

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himself of the interval which this unavoidable delay afforded, in order to make one attempt more to wrest the command out of the hands of Cortes. He loudly complained of Verdugo's conduct, accusing him either of childish facility or of manifest treachery, in suffering Cortes to escape from Trinidad. Anxious to guard against a second disappointment, he sent a person of confidence to the Havana, with peremptory injunctions to Pedro Barba, his lieutenant-governor in that colony, instantly to arrest Cortes, to send him prisoner to St Jago under a strong guard, and to countermand the sailing of the armament until he should receive farther orders. He wrote likewise to the principal officers, requiring them to assist Barba in executing what he had given him in charge. But before the arrival of his messenger, a Franciscan friar of St Jago had secretly conveyed an account of this interesting transaction to Bartholomew de Olmedo, a monk of the same order, who acted as chaplain to the expedition.

Cortes defeats his schemes, and continues his preparations.

CORTES, forewarned of the danger, had time to take precautions for his own safety. His first step was to find some pretext for removing from the Havana Diego de Ordaz, an officer of great merit, but in whom, on account of his known attachment to Velasquez, he could not confide in this trying and delicate juncture.

He gave him the command of a vessel destined to take on board some provisions in a small harbour beyond Cape Antonio, and thus made sure of his absence, without seeming to suspect his fidelity. When he was gone, Cortes no longer concealed the intentions of Velasquez from his troops; and as officers and soldiers were equally impatient to set out on an expedition, in preparing for which most of them had expended all their fortunes, they expressed their astonishment and indignation at that illiberal jealousy, to which the governor was about to sacrifice, not only the honour of their general, but all their sanguine hopes of glory and wealth. With one voice they entreated that he would not abandon the important station to which he had such a good title. They conjured him not to deprive them of a leader whom they followed with such well-founded confidence, and offered to shed the last drop of their blood in maintaining his authority. Cortes was easily induced to comply with what he himself so ardently desired. He swore that he would never desert soldiers who had given him such a signal proof of their attachment, and promised instantly to conduct them to that rich country, which had been so long the object of their thoughts and wishes. This declaration was received with transports of military applause, accompanied with threats and imprecations against all who should pre-

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sume to call in question the jurisdiction of their general, or to obstruct the execution of his designs.

The amount of his forces.

Every thing was now ready for their departure; but, though this expedition was fitted out by the united efforts of the Spanish power in Cuba; though every settlement had contributed its quota of men and provisions; though the governor had laid out considerable sums, and each adventurer had exhausted his stock, or strained his credit, the poverty of the preparations was such as must astonish the present age, and bore, indeed, no resemblance to an armament destined for the conquest of a great empire. The fleet consisted of eleven vessels; the largest of a hundred tons, which was dignified by the name of Admiral; three of seventy or eighty tons, and the rest small open barks. On board of these were six hundred and seventeen men; of which five hundred and eight belonged to the land service, and a hundred and nine were seamen or artificers. The soldiers were divided into eleven companies, according to the number of the ships; to each of which Cortes appointed a captain, and committed to him the command of the vessel while at sea, and of the men when on shore.* As the use of fire-arms among the

* See Note LXXIII. Page 416.

nations of Europe was hitherto confined to a few battalions of regularly disciplined infantry, only thirteen soldiers were armed with muskets, thirty-two were cross-bowmen, and the rest had swords and spears. Instead of the usual defensive armour, which must have been cumbersome in a hot climate, the soldiers wore jackets quilted with cotton, which experience had taught the Spaniards to be a sufficient protection against the weapons of the Americans. They had only sixteen horses, ten small field-pieces, and four falconets.* BOOK V. 1518.

With this slender and ill-provided train did Cortes set sail, to make war upon a monarch whose dominions were more extensive than all the kingdoms subject to the Spanish crown. As religious enthusiasm always mingled with the spirit of adventure in the New World, and, by a combination still more strange, united with avarice, in prompting the Spaniards to all their enterprises, a large cross was displayed in their standards, with this inscription, *Let us follow the cross, for under this sign we shall conquer.* Feb. 10. 1519. His departure from Cuba.

So powerfully were Cortes and his followers animated with both these passions, that no less

* B. Diaz, c. 19.

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eager to plunder the opulent country whither they were bound, than zealous to propagate the Christian faith among its inhabitants, they set out, not with the solicitude natural to men going upon dangerous services, but with that confidence which arises from security of success, and certainty of the divine protection.

Touches at Cozumel;

As Cortes had determined to touch at every place which Grijalva had visited, he steered directly towards the island of Cozumel: there he had the good fortune to redeem Jerome de Aguilar, a Spaniard, who had been eight years a prisoner among the Indians. This man was perfectly acquainted with a dialect of their language, understood through a large extent of country, and possessing besides a considerable share of prudence and sagacity, proved extremely useful as an interpreter. From

March 4. and at Tabasco.

Cozumel Cortes proceeded to the river of Tabasco, in hopes of a reception as friendly as Grijalva had met with there, and of finding gold in the same abundance; but the disposition of the natives, from some unknown cause, was totally changed. After repeated endeavours to conciliate their good-will, he was constrained to have recourse to violence. Though the forces of the enemy were numerous, and advanced with extraordinary courage, they were routed with great slaughter, in several successive actions. The loss which they sus-

tained, and still more the astonishment and terror excited by the destructive effect of the fire-arms, and the dreadful appearance of the horses, humbled their fierce spirits, and induced them to sue for peace. They acknowledged the King of Castile as their sovereign, and granted Cortes a supply of provisions, with a present of cotton garments, some gold, and twenty female slaves.* 1519.

Arrives at St Juan de Ulua.

Cortes continued his course to the westward, keeping as near the shore as possible, in order to observe the country; but could discover no proper place for landing, until he arrived at St Juan de Ulua.† As he entered this harbour, a large canoe full of people, among whom were two who seemed to be persons of distinction, approached his ship with signs of peace and amity. They came on board without fear or distrust, and addressed him in a most respectful manner, but in a language altogether unknown to Aguilar. Cortes was in the utmost perplexity and distress, at an event of which he instantly foresaw all the consequences, and already felt the hesitation and uncertainty with which he should carry on the

April 2.

* See Note LXXIV. Page 416.

† B. Diaz, c. 31—36. Gomara, Cron. c. 18—23. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iv. c. 11. &c.

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great schemes which he meditated, if, in his transactions with the natives, he must depend entirely upon such an imperfect, ambiguous, and conjectural mode of communication as the use of signs. But he did not remain long in his embarrassing situation; a fortunate accident extricated him, when his own sagacity could have contributed little towards his relief. One of the female slaves, whom he had received from the cazique of Tabasco, happened to be present at the first interview between Cortes and his new guests. She perceived his distress, as well as the confusion of Aguilar; and as she perfectly understood the Mexican language, she explained what they had said in the Yucatan tongue, with which Aguilar was acquainted. This woman, known afterwards by the name of Donna Marina, and who makes a conspicuous figure in the history of the New World, where great revolutions were brought about by small causes and inconsiderable instruments, was born in one of the provinces of the Mexican empire. Having been sold as a slave in the early part of her life, after a variety of adventures she fell into the hands of the Tabascans, and had resided long enough among them to acquire their language, without losing the use of her own. Though it was both tedious and troublesome to converse by the intervention of two different interpreters, Cortes was so highly pleased with having discovered

this method of carrying on some intercourse with the people of a country into which he was determined to penetrate, that in the transports of his joy he considered it as a visible interposition of Providence in his favour.*

Lands his troops.

He now learned that the two persons whom he had received on board of his ship were deputies from Teutile and Pilpatoe, two officers entrusted with the government of that province by a great monarch, whom they called Montezuma; and that they were sent to inquire what his intentions were in visiting their coast, and to offer him what assistance he might need, in order to continue his voyage. Cortes, struck with the appearance of those people, as well as the tenor of the message, assured them, in respectful terms, that he approached their country with most friendly sentiments, and came to propose matters of great importance to the welfare of their prince and his kingdom, which he would unfold more fully, in person, to the governor and the general. Next morning, without waiting for any answer, he landed his troops, his horses, and artillery; and having chosen proper ground, began to erect huts for his men, and to fortify his camp. The natives,

* B. Diaz, c. 37, 38, 39. Gomara, Cron. c. 25, 26. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 4.

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instead of opposing the entrance of those fatal guests into their country, assisted them in all their operations, with an alacrity of which they had ere long good reason to repent.

His first interview with the Mexicans.

NEXT day Teutile and Pilpatoe entered the Spanish camp with a numerous retinue, and Cortes considering them as the ministers of a great monarch, entitled to a degree of attention very different from that which the Spaniards were accustomed to pay to the petty caziques with whom they had intercourse in the isles, received them with much formal ceremony. He informed them, that he came as ambassador from Don Carlos of Austria, King of Castile, the greatest monarch of the East, and was entrusted with propositions of such moment, that he could impart them to none but the Emperor Montezuma himself, and therefore required them to conduct him, without loss of time, into the presence of their master. The Mexican officers could not conceal their uneasiness at a request, which they knew would be disagreeable, and which they foresaw might prove extremely embarrassing to their sovereign, whose mind had been filled with many disquieting apprehensions, ever since the former appearance of the Spaniards on his coasts. But before they attempted to dissuade Cortes from insisting on this demand, they endeavoured to conciliate his good-will, by entreating

him to accept of certain presents, which, as humble slaves of Montezuma, they laid at his feet. They were introduced with great parade, and consisted of fine cotton cloth, of plumes of various colours, and of ornaments of gold and silver to a considerable value; the workmanship of which appeared to be as curious as the materials were rich. The display of these produced an effect very different from what the Mexicans intended. Instead of satisfying, it increased the avidity of the Spaniards, and rendered them so eager and impatient to become masters of a country which abounded with such precious productions, that Cortes could hardly listen with patience to the arguments which Pilpatoe and Teutile employed to dissuade him from visiting the capital, and in a haughty determined tone he insisted on his demand, of being admitted to a personal audience of their sovereign. During this interview, some painters, in the train of the Mexican chiefs, had been diligently employed in delineating, upon white cotton cloths, figures of the ships, the horses, the artillery, the soldiers, and whatever else attracted their eyes as singular. When Cortes observed this, and was informed that these pictures were to be sent to Montezuma, in order to convey to him a more lively idea of the strange and wonderful objects now presented to their view,

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than any words could communicate, he resolved to render the representation still more animated and interesting, by exhibiting such a spectacle as might give both them and their monarch an awful impression of the extraordinary prowess of his followers, and the irresistible force of their arms. The trumpets, by his order, sounded an alarm; the troops, in a moment, formed in order of battle, the infantry performed such martial exercises as were best suited to display the effect of their different weapons; the horse, in various evolutions, gave a specimen of their agility and strength; the artillery, pointed towards the thick woods which surrounded the camp, were fired, and made dreadful havoc among the trees. The Mexicans looked on with that silent amazement which is natural, when the mind is struck with objects which are both awful and above its comprehension. But, at the explosion of the cannon, many of them fled, some fell to the ground, and all were so much confounded at the sight of men whose power so nearly resembled that of the gods, that Cortes found it difficult to compose and reassure them. The painters had now many new objects on which to exercise their art, and they put their fancy on the stretch in order to invent figures and symbols to represent the extraordinary things which they had seen.

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Messengers were immediately despatched to Montezuma with those pictures, and a full account of every thing that had passed since the arrival of the Spaniards, and by them Cortes sent a present of some European curiosities to Montezuma, which, though of no great value, he believed would be acceptable on account of their novelty. The Mexican monarchs, in order to obtain early information of every occurrence in all the corners of their extensive empire, had introduced a refinement in police, unknown, at that time, in Europe. They had couriers posted at proper stations along the principal roads; and as these were trained to agility by a regular education, and relieved one another at moderate distances, they conveyed intelligence with surprising rapidity. Though the capital in which Montezuma resided was above an hundred and eighty miles from St Juan de Ulua, Cortes's presents were carried thither, and an answer to his demands was received in a few days. The same officers who had hitherto treated with the Spaniards, were employed to deliver this answer; but as they knew how repugnant the determination of their master was to all the schemes and wishes of the Spanish commander, they would not venture to make it known until they had previously endeavoured to soothe and mollify him. For this purpose they renewed their negociation, by introducing a train of a

Negociations with Montezuma.

His presents.

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hundred Indians, loaded with presents sent to him by Montezuma. The magnificence of these was such as became a great monarch, and far exceeded any idea which the Spaniards had hitherto formed of his wealth. They were placed on mats spread on the ground, in such order as shewed them to the greatest advantage. Cortes and his officers viewed, with admiration, the various manufactures of the country; cotton stuffs so fine, and of such delicate texture, as to resemble silk; pictures of animals, trees, and other natural objects, formed with feathers of different colours, disposed and mingled with such skill and elegance, as to rival the works of the pencil in truth and beauty of imitation. But what chiefly attracted their eyes, were two large plates of a circular form, one of massive gold representing the sun, the other of silver, an emblem of the moon.* These were accompanied with bracelets, collars, rings, and other trinkets of gold; and that nothing might be wanting which could give the Spaniards a complete idea of what the country afforded, with some boxes filled with pearls, precious stones, and grains of gold unwrought, as they had been found in the mines or rivers. Cortes received all these with an appearance of profound veneration for the mo-

* See NOTE LXXV. Page 417.

narch by whom they were bestowed. But when the Mexicans, presuming upon this, informed him, that their master, though he desired him to accept of what he had sent as a token of regard for that monarch whom Cortes represented, would not give his consent that foreign troops should approach nearer to his capital, or even allow them to continue longer in his dominions, the Spanish general declared, in a manner more resolute and peremptory than formerly, that he must insist on his first demand, as he could not, without dishonour, return to his own country, until he was admitted into the presence of the prince whom he was appointed to visit in the name of his sovereign. The Mexicans, astonished at seeing any man dare to oppose that will, which they were accustomed to consider as supreme and irresistible, yet afraid of precipitating their country into an open rupture with such formidable enemies, prevailed with Cortes to promise, that he would not move from his present camp, until the return of a messenger whom they sent to Montezuma for farther instructions.*

Forbids Cortes to approach his capital.

THE firmness with which Cortes adhered to his original proposal, should naturally have

State of the Mexican empire at that period.

* B. Diaz, c. 39. Gomara, Cron. c. 27. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 5, 6.

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brought the negociation between him and Montezuma to a speedy issue, as it seemed to leave the Mexican monarch no choice, but either to receive him with confidence as a friend, or to oppose him openly as an enemy. The latter was what might have been expected from a haughty prince in possession of extensive power. The Mexican empire, at this period, was at a pitch of grandeur to which no society ever attained in so short a period. Though it had subsisted, according to their own traditions, only a hundred and thirty years, its dominion extended from the North to the South Sea, over territories stretching, with some small interruption, above five hundred leagues from east to west, and more than two hundred from north to south, comprehending provinces not inferior in fertility, population, and opulence, to any in the torrid zone. The people were warlike and enterprising; the authority of the monarch unbounded, and his revenues considerable. If, with the forces which might have been suddenly assembled in such an empire, Montezuma had fallen upon the Spaniards while encamped on a barren unhealthy coast, unsupported by any ally, without a place of retreat, and destitute of provisions, it seems to be impossible, even with all the advantages of their superior discipline and arms, that they could have stood the shock, and they must either have perished in

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such an unequal contest, or have abandoned the enterprise.

Character of the monarch.

As the power of Montezuma enabled him to take this spirited part, his own dispositions were such as seemed naturally to prompt him to it. Of all the princes who had swayed the Mexican sceptre, he was the most haughty, the most violent, and the most impatient of controul. His subjects looked up to him with awe, and his enemies with terror. The former he governed with unexampled rigour; but they were impressed with such an opinion of his capacity, as commanded their respect; and, by many victories over the latter, he had spread far the dread of his arms, and had added several considerable provinces to his dominions. But though his talents might be suited to the transactions of a state so imperfectly polished as the Mexican empire, and sufficient to conduct them while in their accustomed course, they were altogether inadequate to a conjuncture so extraordinary, and did not qualify him either to judge with the discernment, or to act with the decision requisite in such a trying emergence.

His perplexity and terror upon the arrival of the Spaniards.

From the moment that the Spaniards appeared on his coast, he discovered symptoms of timidity and embarrassment. Instead of taking such resolutions as the consciousness of his own

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power, or the memory of his former exploits, might have inspired, he deliberated with an anxiety and hesitation which did not escape the notice of his meanest courtiers. The perplexity and discomposure of Montezuma's mind upon this occasion, as well as the general dismay of his subjects, were not owing wholly to the impression which the Spaniards had made by the novelty of their appearance, and the terror of their arms. Its origin may be traced up to a more remote source. There was an opinion, if we may believe the earliest and most authentic Spanish historians, almost universal among the Americans, that some dreadful calamity was impending over their heads, from a race of formidable invaders, who should come from regions towards the rising sun, to overrun and desolate their country. Whether this disquieting apprehension flowed from the memory of some natural calamity which had afflicted that part of the globe, and impressed the minds of the inhabitants with superstitious fears and forebodings, or whether it was an imagination accidentally suggested by the astonishment which the first sight of a new race of men occasioned, it is impossible to determine. But as the Mexicans were more prone to superstition than any people in the New World, they were more deeply affected by the appearance of the Spaniards, whom their credulity instantly represented as the instrument destined to bring about this fatal revo-

lution which they dreaded. Under those circumstances, it ceases to be incredible that a handful of adventurers should alarm the monarch of a great empire, and all his subjects.*

Continues to negociate.

NOTWITHSTANDING the influence of this impression, when the messenger arrived from the Spanish camp with an account that the leader of the strangers, adhering to his original demand, refused to obey the order enjoining him to leave the country, Montezuma assumed some degree of resolution, and, in a transport of rage natural to a fierce prince unaccustomed to meet with any opposition to his will, he threatened to sacrifice those presumptuous men to his gods. But his doubts and fears quickly returned, and instead of issuing orders to carry his threats into execution, he again called his ministers to confer and offer their advice. Feeble and temporizing measures will always be the result when men assemble to deliberate in a situation where they ought to act. The Mexican counsellors took no effectual measure for expelling such troublesome intruders, and were satisfied with issuing a more positive injunction, requiring them to leave the country; but this they

* Cortes Relatione Seconda, ap. Ramus. iii. 234, 235. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iii. c. 1. lib. v. c. 11. lib. vii. c. 6. Gomara, Cron. c. 66. 92. 144.

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preposterously accompanied with a present of such value, as proved fresh inducement to remain there.

Anxiety and apprehensions of the Spaniards.

MEANWHILE, the Spaniards were not without solicitude, or a variety of sentiments, in deliberating concerning their own future conduct. From what they had already seen, many of them formed such extravagant ideas concerning the opulence of the country, that, despising danger or hardships, when they had in view treasures which appeared to be inexhaustible, they were eager to attempt the conquest. Others, estimating the power of the Mexican empire by its wealth, and enumerating the various proofs which had occurred of its being under a well-regulated administration, contended, that it would be an act of the wildest frenzy to attack such a state with a small body of men, in want of provisions, unconnected with any ally, and already enfeebled by the diseases peculiar to the climate, and the loss of several of their number.* Cortes secretly applauded the advocates for bold measures, and cherished their romantic hopes, as such ideas corresponded with his own, and favoured the execution of the schemes which he had formed. From the time that the suspicions of Velasquez broke out

* B. Diaz, c. 40.

1519. Schemes of Cortes.

with open violence in the attempts to deprive him of the command, Cortes saw the necessity of dissolving a connexion which would obstruct and embarrass all his operations, and watched for a proper opportunity of coming to a final rupture with him. Having this in view, he had laboured by every art to secure the esteem and affection of his soldiers. With his abilities for command, it was easy to gain their esteem; and his followers were quickly satisfied that they might rely, with perfect confidence, on the conduct and courage of their leader. Nor was it more difficult to acquire their affection. Among adventurers, nearly of the same rank, and serving at their own expense, the dignity of command did not elevate a general above mingling with those who acted under him. Cortes availed himself of this freedom of intercourse, to insinuate himself into their favour, and by his affable manners, by well-timed acts of liberality to some, by inspiring all with vast hopes, and by allowing them to trade privately with the natives,* he attached the greater part of his soldiers so firmly to himself, that they almost forgot that the armament had been fitted out by the authority, and at the expense of another.

* See NOTE LXXVI. Page 418.

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1519. His address in carrying them on.

During those intrigues, Teutile arrived with the present from Montezuma, and, together with it, delivered the ultimate order of that monarch to depart instantly out of his dominions; and when Cortes, instead of complying, renewed his request of an audience, the Mexican turned from him abruptly, and quitted the camp with looks and gestures which strongly expressed his surprise and resentment. Next morning, none of the natives, who used to frequent the camp in great numbers, in order to barter with the soldiers, and to bring in provisions, appeared. All friendly correspondence seemed now to be at an end, and it was expected every moment that hostilities would commence. This, though an event that might have been foreseen, occasioned a sudden consternation among the Spaniards, which emboldened the adherents of Velasquez not only to murmur and cabal against their general, but to appoint one of their number to remonstrate openly against his imprudence in attempting the conquest of a mighty empire with such inadequate force, and to urge the necessity of returning to Cuba, in order to refit the fleet and augment the army. Diego de Ordaz, one of his principal officers, whom the malecontents charged with this commission, delivered it with a soldierly freedom and bluntness, assuring Cortes that he spoke the sentiments of the whole army. He listened to this remonstrance without any appearance of

emotion, and as he well knew the temper and wishes of his soldiers, and foresaw how they would receive a proposition fatal at once to all the splendid hopes and schemes which they had been forming with such complacency, he carried his dissimulation so far as to seem to relinquish his own measures in compliance with the request of Ordaz, and issued orders that the army should be in readiness next day to re-embark for Cuba. As soon as this was known, the disappointed adventurers exclaimed and threatened; the emissaries of Cortes, mingling with them, inflamed their rage; the ferment became general; the whole camp was almost in open mutiny; all demanding with eagerness to see their commander. Cortes was not slow in appearing; when, with one voice, officers and soldiers expressed their astonishment and indignation at the orders which they had received. It was unworthy, they cried, of the Castilian courage, to be daunted at the first aspect of danger, and infamous to fly before any enemy appeared. For their parts, they were determined not to relinquish an enterprise that had hitherto been successful, and which tended so visibly to spread the knowledge of true religion, and to advance the glory and interest of their country. Happy under his command, they would follow him with alacrity through every danger, in quest of those settlements and treasures which he

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had so long held out to their view; but if he chose rather to return to Cuba, and tamely give up all his hopes of distinction and opulence to an envious rival, they would instantly choose another general to conduct them in that path of glory which he had not spirit to enter.

CORTES, delighted with their ardour, took no offence at the boldness with which it was uttered. The sentiments were what he himself had inspired, and the warmth of expression satisfied him that his followers had imbibed them thoroughly. He affected, however, to be surprised at what he heard, declaring that his orders to prepare for embarking were issued from a persuasion that this was agreeable to his troops; that, from deference to what he had been informed was their inclination, he had sacrificed his own private opinion, which was firmly bent on establishing immediately a settlement on the sea-coast, and then on endeavouring to penetrate into the interior part of the country; that now he was convinced of his error; and as he perceived that they were animated with the generous spirit which breathed in every true Spaniard, he would resume, with fresh ardour, his original plan of operation, and doubted not to conduct them, in the career of victory, to such independent fortunes as their valour merited. Upon this

declaration, shouts of applause testified the excess of their joy. The measure seemed to be taken with unanimous consent; such as secretly condemned it being obliged to join in the acclamations, partly to conceal their disaffection from their general, and partly to avoid the imputation of cowardice from their fellow-soldiers.* 1519.

Establishes a form of civil government.

WITHOUT allowing his men time to cool or to reflect, Cortes set about carrying his design into execution. In order to give a beginning to a colony, he assembled the principal persons in his army, and by their suffrage elected a council and magistrates, in whom the government was to be vested. As men naturally transplant the institutions and forms of the mother-country into their new settlements, this was framed upon the model of a Spanish corporation. The magistrates were distinguished by the same names and ensigns of office, and were to exercise a similar jurisdiction. All the persons chosen were most firmly devoted to Cortes, and the instrument of their election was framed in the king's name, without any mention of their dependence on Velasquez. The two principles of avarice and enthusiasm, which prompted the Spaniards to

* B. Diaz, c. 40, 41, 42. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 6, 7.

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all their enterprises in the New World, seem to have concurred in suggesting the name which Cortes bestowed on his infant settlement. He called it, *The rich town of the true Cross.**

Resigns his commission,

THE first meeting of the new council was distinguished by a transaction of great moment. As soon as it assembled, Cortes applied for leave to enter; and approaching with many marks of profound respect, which added dignity to the tribunal, and set an example of reverence for its authority, he began a long harangue, in which, with much art, and in terms extremely flattering to persons just entering upon their new function, he observed, that as the supreme jurisdiction over the colony which they had planted was now vested in this court, he considered them as clothed with the authority, and representing the person of their sovereign; that accordingly he would communicate to them what he deemed essential to the public safety, with the same dutiful fidelity as if he were addressing his royal master; that the security of a colony settled in a great empire, whose sovereign had already discovered his hostile intentions, depended upon arms, and the efficacy of these upon the subordina-

* Villa rica de la vera Cruz.

tion and discipline preserved among the troops; that his right to command was derived from a commission granted by the governor of Cuba; and as that had been long since revoked, the lawfulness of his jurisdiction might well be questioned; that he might be thought to act upon a defective, or even a dubious title; nor could they trust an army, which might dispute the powers of its general at a juncture when it ought implicitly to obey his orders; that, moved by these considerations, he now resigned all his authority to them, that they, having both right to choose, and power to confer full jurisdiction, might appoint one, in the king's name, to command the army in its future operations; and as for his own part, such was his zeal for the service in which they were engaged, that he would most cheerfully take up a pike with the same hand that laid down the general's truncheon, and convince his fellow-soldiers, that though accustomed to command, he had not forgotten how to obey. Having finished his discourse, he laid the commission from Velasquez upon the table, and after kissing his truncheon, delivered it to the chief magistrate, and withdrew.

and is chosen chief-justice and captain-general.

THE deliberations of the council were not long, as Cortes had concerted this important measure with his confidants, and had prepared the other members, with great address, for the

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part which he wished them to take. His resignation was accepted; and as the uninterrupted tenour of their prosperity under his conduct afforded the most satisfying evidence of his abilities for command, they, by their unanimous suffrage, elected him chief-justice of the colony, and captain-general of its army, and appointed his commission to be made out in the king's name, with most ample powers, which were to continue in force until the royal pleasure should be farther known. That this deed might not be deemed the machination of a junto, the council called together the troops, and acquainted them with what had been resolved. The soldiers, with eager applause, ratified the choice which the council had made; the air resounded with the name of Cortes, and all vowed to shed their blood in support of his authority.

Asserts his authority with vigour.

Cortes having now brought his intrigues to the desired issue, and shaken off his mortifying dependence on the governor of Cuba, accepted of the commission which vested in him supreme jurisdiction, civil as well as military, over the colony, with many professions of respect to the council, and gratitude to the army. Together with his new command, he assumed greater dignity, and began to exercise more extensive powers. Formerly he had felt himself to be only the deputy of a subject; now he acted

as the representative of his sovereign. The adherents of Velasquez, fully aware of what would be the effect of this change in the situation of Cortes, could no longer continue silent and passive spectators of his actions. They exclaimed openly against the proceedings of the council as illegal, and against those of the army as mutinous. Cortes, instantly perceiving the necessity of giving a timely check to such seditious discourse by some vigorous measure, arrested Ordaz, Escudero, and Velasquez de Leon, the ringleaders of this faction, and sent them prisoners aboard the fleet, loaded with chains. Their dependants, astonished and overawed, remained quiet; and Cortes, more desirous to reclaim than to punish his prisoners, who were officers of great merit, courted their friendship with such assiduity and address, that the reconciliation was perfectly cordial; and on the most trying occasions, neither their connexion with the governor of Cuba, nor the memory of the indignity with which they had been treated, tempted them to swerve from an inviolable attachment to his interest.* In this, as well as his other negociations at this critical conjuncture, which decided with respect to his future fame and

* B. Diaz, c. 42, 43. Gomara, Cron. c. 30, 31. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 7.

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fortune, Cortes owed much of his success to the Mexican gold, which he distributed with a liberal hand both among his friends and his opponents.*

His friendship courted by the Zempoallans.

CORTES having thus rendered the union between himself and his army indissoluble, by engaging it to join him in disclaiming any dependence on the governor of Cuba, and in repeated acts of disobedience to his authority, thought he might now venture to quit the camp in which he had hitherto remained, and advance into the country. To this he was encouraged by an event no less fortunate than seasonable. Some Indians having approached his camp in a mysterious manner, were introduced into his presence. He found that they were sent with a proffer of friendship from the cazique of Zempoalla, a considerable town at no great distance; and from their answers to a variety of questions which he put to them, according to his usual practice in every interview with the people of the country, he gathered, that their master, though subject to the Mexican empire, was impatient of the yoke, and filled with such dread and hatred of Montezuma, that nothing could be more acceptable to him than any prospect of deliverance from the oppression under

* B. Diaz, c. 44.

which he groaned. On hearing this, a ray of light and hope broke in upon the mind of Cortes. He saw that the great empire which he intended to attack was neither perfectly united, nor its sovereign universally beloved. He concluded, that the causes of disaffection could not be confined to one province, but that in other corners there must be malecontents, so weary of subjection, or so desirous of change, as to be ready to follow the standard of any protector. Full of those ideas, on which he began to form a scheme, that time, and more perfect information concerning the state of the country enabled him to mature, he gave a most gracious reception to the Zempoallans, and promised soon to visit their cazique.*

Marches to Zempoalla.

In order to perform this promise, it was not necessary to vary the route which he had already fixed for his march. Some officers, whom he had employed to survey the coast, having discovered a village named Quiabislan, about forty miles to the northward, which, both on account of the fertility of the soil and commodiousness of the harbour, seemed to be a more proper station for a settlement than that where he was encamped, Cortes determined to remove thither. Zempoalla lay in

* B. Diaz, c. 41. Gomara, Cron. c. 28.

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his way, where the cazique received him in the manner which he had reason to expect—with gifts and caresses, like a man solicitous to gain his good-will; with respect approaching almost to adoration, like one who looked up to him as a deliverer. From him he learned many particulars with respect to the character of Montezuma, and the circumstances which rendered his dominion odious. He was a tyrant, as the cazique told him with tears, haughty, cruel, and suspicious; who treated his own subjects with arrogance, ruined the conquered provinces by excessive exactions, and often tore their sons and daughters from them by violence; the former, to be offered as victims to his gods; the latter, to be reserved as concubines for himself or favourites. Cortes, in reply to him, artfully insinuated, that one great object of the Spaniards in visiting a country so remote from their own, was to redress grievances, and to relieve the oppressed; and having encouraged him to hope for this interposition in due time, he continued his march to Quiabislan.

Builds a fort.

THE spot which his officers had recommended as a proper situation, appeared to him to be so well chosen, that he immediately marked out ground for a town. The houses to be erected were only huts; but these were to be surrounded with fortifications, of sufficient

strength to resist the assaults of an Indian army. As the finishing of those fortifications was essential to the existence of a colony, and of no less importance in prosecuting the designs which the leader and his followers meditated, both in order to secure a place of retreat, and to preserve their communication with the sea, every man in the army, officers as well as soldiers, put his hand to the work, Cortes himself setting them an example of activity and perseverance in labour. The Indians of Zempoalla and Quiabislan lent their aid; and this petty station, the parent of so many mighty settlements, was soon in a state of defence.* 1519.

Concludes a formal alliance with several caziques.

While engaged in this necessary work, Cortes had several interviews with the caziques of Zempoalla and Quiabislan; and availing himself of their wonder and astonishment at the new objects which they daily beheld, he gradually inspired them with such an high opinion of the Spaniards, as beings of a superior order, and irresistible in arms, that, relying on their protection, they ventured to insult the Mexican power, at the very name of which they were accustomed to tremble. Some of Montezuma's officers having appeared to levy

* B. Diaz, c. 45, 46. 48. Gomara, Cron. c. 32, 33. 37. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 8, 9.

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the usual tribute, and to demand a certain number of human victims as an expiation for their guilt in presuming to hold intercourse with those strangers whom the Emperor had commanded to leave his dominions, instead of obeying the order, the caziques made them prisoners, treated them with great indignity, and as their superstition was no less barbarous than that of the Mexicans, they prepared to sacrifice them to their gods. From this last danger they were delivered by the interposition of Cortes, who manifested the utmost horror at the mention of such a deed. The two caziques having now been pushed to an act of such open rebellion, as left them no hope of safety but in attaching themselves inviolably to the Spaniards, they soon completed their union with them, by formally acknowledging themselves to be vassals of the same monarch. Their example was followed by the Totonaques, a fierce people who inhabited the mountainous part of the country. They willingly subjected themselves to the crown of Castile, and offered to accompany Cortes, with all their forces, in his march towards Mexico.*

Cortes had now been above three months in New Spain; and though this period had not

* B. Diaz, c. 47. Gomara, Cron. 35, 36. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 9, 10, 11.

1519. His measures to procure a confirmation of his authority by the King.

been distinguished by martial exploits, every moment had been employed in operations, which, though less splendid, were more important. By his address in conducting his intrigues with his own army, as well as his sagacity in carrying on his negociations with the natives, he had already laid the foundations of his future success. But whatever confidence he might place in the plan which he had formed, he could not but perceive, that as his title to command was derived from a doubtful authority, he held it by a precarious tenure. The injuries which Velasquez had received, were such as would naturally prompt him to apply for redress to their common sovereign; and such a representation, he foresaw, might be given of his conduct, that he had reason to apprehend, not only that he might be degraded from his present rank, but subjected to punishment. Before he began his march, it was necessary to take the most effectual precautions against this impending danger. With this view he persuaded the magistrates of the colony at Vera Cruz to address a letter to the King, the chief object of which was to justify their own conduct in establishing a colony independent on the jurisdiction of Velasquez. In order to accomplish this, they endeavoured to detract from his merit in fitting out the two former armaments under Cordova and Grijalva, affirming that these had been equip-

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ped by the adventurers who engaged in the expeditions, and not by the governor. They contended that the sole object of Velasquez was to trade or barter with the natives, not to attempt the conquest of New Spain, or to settle a colony there. They asserted that Cortes, and the officers who served under him, had defrayed the greater part of the expense in fitting out the armament. On this account, they humbly requested their sovereign to ratify what they had done in his name, and to confirm Cortes in the supreme command by his royal commission. That Charles might be induced to grant more readily what they demanded, they gave him a pompous description of the country which they had discovered; of its riches, the number of its inhabitants, their civilization and arts; they related the progress which they had already made, in annexing some parts of the country situated on the sea-coast to the crown of Castile; and mentioned the schemes which they had formed, as well as the hopes which they entertained, of reducing the whole to subjection.* Cortes himself wrote in a similar

* In this letter it is asserted, that though a considerable number of Spaniards had been wounded in their various encounters with the people of Tabasco, not one of them died, and all had recovered in a very short time. This seems to confirm what I observe in p. 297. concerning the imperfection of the offensive weapons used by the Ameri-

strain; and as he knew that the Spanish court, accustomed to the exaggerated representations of every new country by its discoverers, would give little credit to their splendid accounts of New Spain, if these were not accompanied with such a specimen of what it contained as would excite an high idea of its opulence, he solicited his soldiers to relinquish what they might claim as their part of the treasures which had hitherto been collected, in order that the whole might be sent to the King. Such was the ascendant which he had acquired over their minds, and such their own romantic expectations of future wealth, that an army of indigent and rapacious adventurers was capable of this generous effort, and offered to their sovereign the richest present that had hitherto been transmitted from the New World.* Portocarrero and Montejo, the chief magistrates of the colony, were appointed to carry this present to Castile,

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cans. In this letter, the human sacrifices offered by the Mexicans to their deities are described minutely, and with great horror; some of the Spaniards, it is said, had been eye-witnesses of those barbarous rites. To the letter is subjoined a catalogue and description of the presents sent to the Emperor. That published by Gomara, Cron. c. 29. seems to have been copied from it. Pet. Martyr describes many of the articles in his treatise 'De Insulis nuper inventis,' p. 354, &c.

* See NOTE LXXVII. Page 418.

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with express orders not to touch at Cuba in their passage thither.*

A conspiracy against Cortes.

WHILE a vessel was preparing for their departure, an unexpected event occasioned a general alarm. Some soldiers and sailors, secretly attached to Velasquez, or intimidated at the prospect of the dangers unavoidable in attempting to penetrate into the heart of a great empire with such unequal force, formed the design of seizing one of the brigantines, and making their escape to Cuba, in order to give the governor such intelligence as might enable him to intercept the ship which was to carry the treasure and despatches to Spain. This conspiracy, though formed by persons of low rank, was conducted with profound secrecy; but at the moment when every thing was ready for execution, they were betrayed by one of their associates.

He destroys his fleet.

THOUGH the good fortune of Cortes interposed so seasonably on this occasion, the detection of this conspiracy filled his mind with most disquieting apprehensions, and prompted him to execute a scheme which he had long revolved. He perceived that the spirit of disaffection still lurked among his troops; that

* B. Diaz, c. 54. Gomara, Cron. c. 40.

though hitherto checked by the uniform success of his schemes, or suppressed by the hand of authority, various events might occur which would encourage and call it forth. He observed, that many of his men, weary of the fatigue of service, longed to revisit their settlements in Cuba; and that upon any appearance of extraordinary danger, or any reverse of fortune, it would be impossible to restrain them from returning thither. He was sensible that his forces, already too feeble, could bear no diminution, and that a very small defection of his followers would oblige him to abandon the enterprise. After ruminating often, and with much solicitude, upon those particulars, he saw no hope of success but in cutting off all possibility of retreat, and in reducing his men to the necessity of adopting the same resolution with which he himself was animated, either to conquer or to perish. With this view, he determined to destroy his fleet; but as he durst not venture to execute such a bold resolution by his single authority, he laboured to bring his soldiers to adopt his ideas with respect to the propriety of this measure. His address in accomplishing this was not inferior to the arduous occasion in which it was employed. He persuaded some, that the ships had suffered so much by having been long at sea, as to be altogether unfit for service; to others he pointed out what a seasonable rein-

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forcement of strength they would derive from the junction of an hundred men, now unprofitably employed as sailors; and to all he represented the necessity of fixing their eyes and wishes upon what was before them, without allowing the idea of a retreat once to enter their thoughts. With universal consent the ships were drawn ashore, and after stripping them of their sails, rigging, iron works, and whatever else might be of use, they were broke in pieces. Thus, from an effort of magnanimity to which there is nothing parallel in history, five hundred men voluntarily consented to be shut up in a hostile country, filled with powerful and unknown nations; and having precluded every means of escape, left themselves without any resource but their own valour and perseverance.*

NOTHING now retarded Cortes; the alacrity of his troops and the disposition of his allies were equally favourable. All the advantages, however, derived from the latter, though procured by much assiduity and address, were well nigh lost in a moment, by an indiscreet sally of religious zeal, which, on many occasions, precipitated Cortes into actions incon-

* Relat. di Cortes; Ramus. iii. 225. B. Diaz, c. 57, 58. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 14.

sistent with the prudence that distinguishes his character. Though hitherto he had neither time nor opportunity to explain to the natives the errors of their own superstition, or to instruct them in the principles of the Christian faith, he commanded his soldiers to overturn the altars and to destroy the idols in the chief temple of Zempoalla, and in their place to erect a crucifix and an image of the Virgin Mary. The people beheld this with astonishment and horror; the priests excited them to arms; but such was the authority of Cortes, and so great the ascendant which the Spaniards had acquired, that the commotion was appeased without bloodshed, and concord perfectly re-established.*

Advances into the country.

CORTES began his march from Zempoalla on the sixteenth of August, with five hundred men, fifteen horse, and six field-pieces. The rest of his troops, consisting chiefly of such as from age or infirmity were less fit for active service, he left as a garrison in Villa Rica, under the command of Escalante, an officer of merit, and warmly attached to his interest. The cazique of Zempoalla supplied him with provisions, and with two hundred of those Indians called *Tamemes*, whose office, in a

* B. Diaz, c. 41, 42. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 3, 4.

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country where tame animals were unknown, was to carry burdens, and to perform all servile labour. They were a great relief to the Spanish soldiers, who hitherto had been obliged not only to carry their own baggage, but to drag along the artillery by main force. He offered likewise a considerable body of his troops, but Cortes was satisfied with four hundred; taking care, however, to choose persons of such note as might prove hostages for the fidelity of their master. Nothing memorable happened in his progress, until he arrived on the confines of Tlascala. The inhabitants of that province, a warlike people, were implacable enemies of the Mexicans, and had been united in an ancient alliance with the caziques of Zempoalla. Though less civilized than the subjects of Montezuma, they were advanced in improvement far beyond the rude nations of America, whose manners we have described. They had made considerable progress in agriculture; they dwelt in large towns; they were not strangers to some species of commerce; and in the imperfect accounts of their institutions and laws, transmitted to us by the early Spanish writers, we discern traces both of distributive justice and of criminal jurisdiction in their interior police. But still, as the degree of their civilization was incomplete, and as they depended for subsistence, not on agriculture alone, but trusted for it in a great mea-

sure to hunting, they retained many of the qualities natural to men in this state. Like them, they were fierce and revengeful; like them, too, they were high-spirited and independent. In consequence of the former, they were involved in perpetual hostilities, and had but a slender and occasional intercourse with neighbouring states. The latter inspired them with such detestation of servitude, that they not only refused to stoop to a foreign yoke, and maintained an obstinate and successful contest in defence of their liberty against the superior power of the Mexican empire, but they guarded with equal solicitude against domestic tyranny; and disdaining to acknowledge any master, they lived under the mild and limited jurisdiction of a council elected by their several tribes.

His war with the Tlascalans.

Cortes, though he had received information concerning the martial character of this people, flattered himself that his professions of delivering the oppressed from the tyranny of Montezuma, their inveterate enmity to the Mexicans, and the example of their ancient allies the Zempoallans, might induce the Tlascalans to grant him a friendly reception. In order to dispose them to this, four Zempoallans of great eminence were sent ambassadors, to request, in his name, and in that of their cazique, that they would permit the Spaniards to pass through

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the territories of the republic, in their way to Mexico. But instead of the favourable answer which was expected, the Tlascalans seized the ambassadors, and without any regard to their public character, made preparations for sacrificing them to their gods. At the same time, they assembled their troops, in order to oppose those unknown invaders, if they should attempt to make their passage good by force of arms. Various motives concurred in precipitating the Tlascalans into this resolution. A fierce people, shut up within its own narrow precincts, and little accustomed to any intercourse with foreigners, is apt to consider every stranger as an enemy, and is easily excited to arms. They concluded, from Cortes's proposal of visiting Montezuma in his capital, that, notwithstanding all his professions, he courted the friendship of a monarch whom they both hated and feared. The imprudent zeal of Cortes in violating the temples in Zempoalla, filled the Tlascalans with horror; and as they were no less attached to their superstition than the other nations of New Spain, they were impatient to avenge their injured gods, and to acquire the merit of offering up to them, as victims, those impious men who had dared to profane their altars: they contemned the small number of the Spaniards, as they had not yet measured their own strength with that of these new enemies, and had no idea of the superi-

ority which they derived from their arms and discipline.

Aug. 30. Success of it.

Cortes, after waiting some days, in vain, for the return of his ambassadors, advanced into the Tlascalan territories. As the resolutions of people who delight in war are executed with no less promptitude than they are formed, he found troops in the field ready to oppose him. They attacked him with great intrepidity, and, in the first encounter, wounded some of the Spaniards, and killed two horses; a loss, in their situation, of great moment, because it was irreparable. From this specimen of their courage, Cortes saw the necessity of proceeding with caution. His army marched in close order; he chose the stations where he halted, with attention, and fortified every camp with extraordinary care. During fourteen days he was exposed to almost uninterrupted assaults, the Tlascalans advancing with numerous armies, and renewing the attack in various forms, with a degree of valour and perseverance to which the Spaniards had seen nothing parallel in the New World. The Spanish historians describe those successive battles with great pomp, and enter into a minute detail of particulars, mingling many exaggerated and incredible circumstances * with

* See Note LXXVIII. Page 418.

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such as are real and marvellous. But no power of words can render the recital of a combat interesting, where there is no equality of danger; and when the narrative closes with an account of thousands slain on the one side, while not a single person falls on the other, the most laboured descriptions of the previous disposition of the troops, or of the various vicissitudes in the engagement, command no attention.

Some singular circumstances in it.

THERE are some circumstances, however, in this war, which are memorable, and merit notice, as they throw light upon the character both of the people of New Spain, and of their conquerors. Though the Tlascalans brought into the field such numerous armies as appear sufficient to have overwhelmed the Spaniards, they were never able to make any impression upon their small battalion. Singular as this may seem, it is not inexplicable. The Tlascalans, though addicted to war, were, like all unpolished nations, strangers to military order and discipline, and lost in a great measure the advantage which they might have derived from their numbers, and the impetuosity of their attack, by their constant solicitude to carry off the dead and wounded. This point of honour, founded on a sentiment of tenderness natural to the human mind, and strengthened by anxiety to preserve the bodies of their

countrymen from being devoured by their enemies, was universal among the people of New Spain. Attention to this pious office occupied them even during the heat of combat,* broke their union, and diminished the force of the impression which they might have made by a joint effort.

Not only was their superiority in number of little avail, but the imperfection of their military weapons rendered their valour in a great measure inoffensive. After three battles, and many skirmishes and assaults, not one Spaniard was killed in the field. Arrows and spears, headed with flint or the bones of fishes, stakes hardened in the fire, and wooden swords, though destructive weapons among naked Indians, were easily turned aside by the Spanish bucklers, and could hardly penetrate the *escaupiles*, or quilted jackets, which the soldiers wore. The Tlascalans advanced boldly to the charge, and often fought hand to hand. Many of the Spaniards were wounded, though all slightly, which cannot be imputed to any want of courage or strength in their enemies, but to the defect of the arms with which they assailed them.

* B. Diaz, c. 65.

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NOTWITHSTANDING the fury with which the Tlascalans attacked the Spaniards, they seemed to have conducted their hostilities with some degree of barbarous generosity. They gave the Spaniards warning of their hostile intentions, and as they knew that their invaders wanted provisions, and imagined, perhaps, like the other Americans, that they had left their own country because it did not afford them subsistence, they sent to their camp a large supply of poultry and maize, desiring them to eat plentifully, because they scorned to attack an enemy enfeebled by hunger; and it would be an affront to their gods to offer them famished victims, as well as disagreeable to themselves to feed on such emaciated prey.*

WHEN they were taught by the first encounter with their new enemies, that it was not easy to execute this threat; when they perceived, in the subsequent engagements, that notwithstanding all the efforts of their own valour, of which they had a very high opinion, not one of the Spaniards was slain or taken, they began to conceive them to be a superior order of beings, against whom human power could not avail. In this extremity they had recourse to their priests, requiring them to reveal the mysterious

* Herrera, dec. 2. lib. vi. c. 6. Gomara, Cron. c. 47.

causes of such extraordinary events, and to declare what new means they should employ in order to repulse those formidable invaders. The priests, after many sacrifices and incantations, delivered this response:—That these strangers were the offspring of the sun, procreated by his animating energy in the regions of the east; that, by day, while cherished with the influence of his parental beams, they were invincible; but by night, when his reviving heat was withdrawn, their vigour declined and faded like the herbs in the field, and they dwindled down into mortal men.* Theories less plausible have gained credit with more enlightened nations, and have influenced their conduct. In consequence of this, the Tlascalans, with the implicit confidence of men who fancy themselves to be under the guidance of Heaven, acted in contradiction to one of their most established maxims in war, and ventured to attack the enemy with a strong body in the night-time, in hopes of destroying them when enfeebled and surprised. But Cortes had greater vigilance and discernment than to be deceived by the rude stratagems of an Indian army. The sentinels at his out-posts, observing some extraordinary movement among the Tlascalans,

* B. Diaz, c. 66.

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gave the alarm. In a moment the troops were under arms, and sallying out, dispersed the party with great slaughter, without allowing it to approach the camp. The Tlascalans, convinced by sad experience that their priests had deluded them, and satisfied that they attempted in vain, either to deceive or to vanquish their enemies, their fierceness abated, and they began to incline seriously to peace.

The Tlascalans disposed to peace.

THEY were at a loss, however, in what manner to address the strangers, what idea to form of their character, and whether to consider them as beings of a gentle or of a malevolent nature. There were circumstances in their conduct which seemed to favour each opinion. On the one hand, as the Spaniards constantly dismissed the prisoners whom they took, not only without injury, but often with presents of European toys, and renewed their offers of peace after every victory; this lenity amazed people, who, according to the exterminating system of war known in America, were accustomed to sacrifice and devour without mercy all the captives taken in battle, and disposed them to entertain favourable sentiments of the humanity of their new enemies. But, on the other hand, as Cortes had seized fifty of their countrymen who brought provisions to his camp, and, supposing them to be spies, had cut

off their hands;* this bloody spectacle, added to the terror occasioned by the fire-arms and horses, filled them with dreadful impressions of the ferocity of their invaders.† This uncertainty was apparent in the mode of addressing the Spaniards. "If," said they, "you are divinities of a cruel and savage nature, we present to you five slaves, that you may drink their blood and eat their flesh. If you are mild deities, accept an offering of incense and variegated plumes. If you are men, here is meat, and bread, and fruit, to nourish you."‡ The peace, which both parties now desired with equal ardour, was soon concluded. The Tlascalans yielded themselves as vassals to the crown of Castile, and engaged to assist Cortes in all his future operations. He took the republic under his protection, and promised to defend their persons and possessions from injury or violence.

Concluded.

This treaty was concluded at a seasonable juncture for the Spaniards. The fatigue of service among a small body of men, surrounded by such a multitude of enemies, was incredible.

Advantages of it to the Spaniards.

* Cortes, Relat.; Ramus. iii. 228. C. Gomara, Cron. c. 48.

† See Note LXXIX. Page 420.

‡ B. Diaz, c. 70. Gomara, Cron. c. 47. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. vi. c. 7.

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Half the army was on duty every night, and even they whose turn it was to rest, slept always upon their arms, that they might be ready to run to their posts on a moment's warning. Many of them were wounded; a good number, and among these Cortes himself, laboured under the distempers prevalent in hot climates, and several had died since they set out from Vera Cruz. Notwithstanding the supplies which they received from the Tlascalans, they were often in want of provisions, and so destitute of the necessaries most requisite in dangerous service, that they had no salve to dress their wounds, but what was composed with the fat of the Indians whom they had slain.* Worn out with such intolerable toil and hardships, many of the soldiers began to murmur, and, when they reflected on the multitude and boldness of their enemies, more were ready to despair. It required the utmost exertion of Cortes's authority and address to check this spirit of despondency in its progress, and to reanimate his followers with their wonted sense of their own superiority over the enemies with whom they had to contend.† The submission of the Tlascalans, and their own triumphant

* B. Diaz, c. 62. 65.

† Cortes, Relat.; Ramus. iii. 229. B. Diaz, c. 69. Gomara, Cron. c. 51.

entry into the capital city, where they were received with the reverence paid to beings of a superior order, banished, at once, from the minds of the Spaniards, all memory of past sufferings, dispelled every anxious thought with respect to their future operations, and fully satisfied them that there was not now any power in America able to withstand their arms.*

Cortes solicitous to gain their confidence;

Cortes remained twenty days in Tlascala, in order to allow his troops a short interval of repose after such hard service. During that time he was employed in transactions and inquiries of great moment with respect to his future schemes. In his daily conferences with the Tlascalan chiefs, he received information concerning every particular relative to the state of the Mexican empire, or to the qualities of its sovereign, which could be of use in regulating his conduct, whether he should be obliged to act as a friend or as an enemy. As he found that the antipathy of his new allies to the Mexican nation was no less implacable than had been represented, and perceived what benefit he might derive from the aid of such powerful confederates, he employed all his powers of insinuation in order to gain their confidence. Nor was any extraordinary exertion of these

* Cortes, Relat.; Ramus. iii. 230. B. Diaz, c. 72.

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necessary. The Tlascalans, with the levity of mind natural to unpolished men, were, of their own accord, disposed to run from the extreme of hatred to that of fondness. Every thing in the appearance and conduct of their guests was to them matter of wonder.* They gazed with admiration at whatever the Spaniards did, and fancying them to be of heavenly origin, were eager not only to comply with their demands, but to anticipate their wishes. They offered, accordingly, to accompany Cortes in his march to Mexico, with all the forces of the republic, under the command of their most experienced captains.

which he had almost lost by his rash zeal.

But, after bestowing so much pains on cementing this union, all the beneficial fruits of it were on the point of being lost, by a new effusion of that intemperate religious zeal with which Cortes was animated, no less than the other adventurers of the age. They all considered themselves as instruments employed by Heaven to propagate the Christian faith, and the less they were qualified, either by their knowledge or morals, for such a function, they were more eager to discharge it. The profound veneration of the Tlascalans for the Spaniards, having encouraged Cortes to explain

* See Note LXXX. Page 421.

to some of their chiefs the doctrines of the Christian religion, and to insist that they should abandon their own superstitions, and embrace the faith of their new friends, they, according to an idea universal among barbarous nations, readily acknowledged the truth and excellence of what he taught; but contended, that the *Teules* of Tlascala were divinities no less than the God in whom the Spaniards believed; and as that Being was entitled to the homage of Europeans, so they were bound to revere the same powers which their ancestors had worshipped. Cortes continued, nevertheless, to urge his demand in a tone of authority, mingling threats with his arguments, until the Tlascalans could bear it no longer, and conjured him never to mention this again, lest the gods should avenge on their heads the guilt of having listened to such a proposition. Cortes, astonished and enraged at their obstinacy, prepared to execute by force what he could not accomplish by persuasion, and was going to overturn their altars, and cast down their idols with the same violent hand as at Zempoalla, if Father Bartholomew de Olmedo, chaplain to the expedition, had not checked his inconsiderate impetuosity. He represented the imprudence of such an attempt in a large city newly reconciled, and filled with people no less superstitious than warlike; he declared, that the proceeding at Zempoalla had always appeared

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to him precipitate and unjust; that religion was not to be propagated by the sword, or infidels to be converted by violence; that other weapons were to be employed in this ministry; patient instruction must enlighten the understanding, and pious example captivate the heart, before men could be induced to abandon error, and embrace the truth.* Amidst scenes, where a narrow-minded bigotry appears in such close union with oppression and cruelty, sentiments so liberal and humane soothe the mind with unexpected pleasure; and at a time when the rights of conscience were little understood in the Christian world, and the idea of toleration unknown, one is astonished to find a Spanish monk of the sixteenth century among the first advocates against persecution, and in behalf of religious liberty. The remonstrances of an ecclesiastic, no less respectable for wisdom than virtue, had their proper weight with Cortes. He left the Tlascalans in the undisturbed exercise of their own rites, requiring only that they should desist from their horrid practice of offering human victims in sacrifice.

Advances to Cholula.

CORTES, as soon as his troops were fit for service, resolved to continue his march towards

* B. Diaz, c. 77. p. 54. c. 83. p. 61.

Mexico, notwithstanding the earnest dissuasives of the Tlascalans, who represented his destruction as unavoidable, if he put himself in the power of a prince so faithless and cruel as Montezuma. As he was accompanied by six thousand Tlascalans, he had now the command of forces which resembled a regular army. They directed their course towards Cholula; Montezuma, who had at length consented to admit the Spaniards into his presence, having informed Cortes, that he had given orders for his friendly reception there. Cholula was a considerable town, and though only five leagues distant from Tlascala, was formerly an independent state, but had been lately subjected to the Mexican empire. This was considered by all the people of New Spain as a holy place, the sanctuary and chief seat of their gods, to which pilgrims resorted from every province, and a greater number of human victims were offered in its principal temple than even in that of Mexico.* Montezuma seems to have invited the Spaniards thither, either from some superstitious hope that the gods would not suffer this sacred mansion to be defiled, without pouring down their wrath upon those impious strangers, who ventured to

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* Torquemada, Monar. Ind. i. 281, 282. ii. 291. Gomara, Cron. c. 61. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. vii. c. 2.

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insult their power in the place of its peculiar residence; or from a belief that he himself might there attempt to cut them off with more certain success, under the immediate protection of his divinities.

The severity of his procedure there.

CORTES had been warned by the Tlascalans, before he set out on his march, to keep a watchful eye over the Cholulans. He himself, though received into the town with much seeming respect and cordiality, observed several circumstances in their conduct which excited suspicion. Two of the Tlascalans, who were encamped at some distance from the town, as the Cholulans refused to admit their ancient enemies within its precincts, having found means to enter in disguise, acquainted Cortes, that they observed the women and children of the principal citizens retiring in great hurry every night; and that six children had been sacrificed in the chief temple, a rite which indicated the execution of some warlike enterprise to be approaching. At the same time, Marina the interpreter received information from an Indian woman of distinction, whose confidence she had gained, that the destruction of her friends was concerted; that a body of Mexican troops lay concealed near the town; that some of the streets were barricaded, and in others, pits or deep trenches were dug, and slightly covered over, as traps

into which the horses might fall; that stones or missive weapons were collected on the tops of the temples, with which to overwhelm the infantry; that the fatal hour was now at hand, and their ruin unavoidable. Cortes, alarmed at this concurring evidence, secretly arrested three of the chief priests, and extorted from them a confession that confirmed the intelligence which he had received. As not a moment was to be lost, he instantly resolved to prevent his enemies, and to inflict on them such dreadful vengeance as might strike Montezuma and his subjects with terror. For this purpose, the Spaniards and Zempoallans were drawn up in a large court, which had been allotted for their quarters, near the centre of the town; the Tlascalans had orders to advance; the magistrates, and several of the chief citizens were sent for, under various pretexts, and seized. On a signal given, the troops rushed out, and fell upon the multitude, destitute of leaders, and so much astonished, that the weapons dropping from their hands, they stood motionless, and incapable of defence. While the Spaniards pressed them in front, the Tlascalans attacked them in the rear. The streets were filled with bloodshed and death. The temples, which afforded a retreat to the priests and some of the leading men, were set on fire, and they perished in the flames. This scene of horror continued two

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days; during which the wretched inhabitants suffered all that the destructive rage of the Spaniards, or the implacable revenge of their Indian allies, could inflict. At length the carnage ceased, after the slaughter of six thousand Cholulans, without the loss of a single Spaniard. Cortes then released the magistrates, and reproaching them bitterly for their intended treachery, declared, that as justice was now appeased, he forgave the offence, but required them to recal the citizens who had fled, and re-establish order in the town. Such was the ascendant which the Spaniards had acquired over this superstitious race of men, and so deeply were they impressed with an opinion of their superior discernment, as well as power, that, in obedience to this command, the city was in a few days filled again with people, who, amidst the ruins of their sacred buildings, yielded respectful service to men whose hands were stained with the blood of their relations and fellow-citizens.*

Oct. 29. Advances towards Mexico.

From Cholula, Cortes advanced directly towards Mexico, which was only twenty leagues distant. In every place through which he

* Cortes, Relat. Ramus. iii. 231. B. Diaz, c. 83. Gomara, Cron. c. 64. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. vii. c. 1, 2. See Note LXXXI. Page 421.

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passed, he was received as a person possessed of sufficient power to deliver the empire from the oppression under which it groaned; and the caziques or governors communicated to him all the grievances which they felt under the tyrannical government of Montezuma, with that unreserved confidence which men naturally repose in superior beings. When Cortes first observed the seeds of discontent in the remote provinces of the empire, hope dawned upon his mind; but when he now discovered such symptoms of alienation from their monarch near the seat of government, he concluded that the vital parts of the constitution were affected, and conceived the most sanguine expectations of overturning a state, whose natural strength was thus divided and impaired. While those reflections encouraged the general to persist in his arduous undertaking, the soldiers were no less animated by observations more obvious to their capacity. In descending from the mountains of Chalco, across which the road lay, the vast plain of Mexico opened gradually to their view. When they first beheld this prospect, one of the most striking and beautiful on the face of the earth; when they observed fertile and cultivated fields, stretching farther than the eye could reach; when they saw a lake resembling the sea in extent, encompassed with large towns, and discovered the capital city rising upon an island

First view of it.

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in the middle, adorned with its temples and turrets; the scene so far exceeded their imagination, that some believed the fanciful descriptions of romance were realized, and that its enchanted palaces and gilded domes were presented to their sight; others could hardly persuade themselves that this wonderful spectacle was any thing more than a dream.* As they advanced, their doubts were removed, but their amazement increased. They were now fully satisfied that the country was rich beyond any conception which they had formed of it, and flattered themselves that at length they should obtain an ample recompense for all their services and sufferings.

The irresolution of Montezuma.

HITHERTO they had met with no enemy to oppose their progress, though several circumstances occurred which led them to suspect that some design was formed to surprise and cut them off. Many messengers arrived successively from Montezuma, permitting them one day to advance, requiring them on the next to retire, as his hopes or fears alternately prevailed; and so wonderful was this infatuation, which seems to be unaccountable on any supposition but that of a superstitious dread of the Spaniards, as beings of a superior nature,

* See NOTE LXXXII. Page 422.

that Cortes was almost at the gates of the capital, before the monarch had determined whether to receive him as a friend, or to oppose him as an enemy. But as no sign of open hostility appeared, the Spaniards, without regarding the fluctuations of Montezuma's sentiments, continued their march along the causeway which led to Mexico through the lake, with great circumspection and the strictest discipline, though without seeming to suspect the prince whom they were about to visit.

His first interview with the Spaniards.

When they drew near the city, about a thousand persons, who appeared to be of distinction, came forth to meet them, adorned with plumes, and clad in mantles of fine cotton. Each of these, in his order, passed by Cortes, and saluted him according to the mode deemed most respectful and submissive in their country. They announced the approach of Montezuma himself, and soon after his harbingers came in sight. There appeared first two hundred persons in an uniform dress, with large plumes of feathers, alike in fashion, marching two and two, in deep silence, bare-footed, with their eyes fixed on the ground. These were followed by a company of higher rank, in their most showy apparel, in the midst of whom was Montezuma, in a chair or litter richly ornamented with gold, and feathers of various colours. Four of his principal favourites carried him on

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their shoulders, others supported a canopy of curious workmanship over his head. Before him marched three officers with rods of gold in their hands, which they lifted up on high at certain intervals, and at that signal all the people bowed their heads, and hid their faces, as unworthy to look on so great a monarch. When he drew near, Cortes dismounted, advancing towards him with officious haste, and in a respectful posture. At the same time Montezuma alighted from his chair, and leaning on the arms of two of his near relations, approached with a slow and stately pace, his attendants covering the street with cotton cloths, that he might not touch the ground. Cortes accosted him with profound reverence, after the European fashion. He returned the salutation, according to the mode of his country, by touching the earth with his hand, and then kissing it. This ceremony, the customary expression of veneration from inferiors towards those who were above them in rank, appeared such amazing condescension in a proud monarch, who scarcely deigned to consider the rest of mankind as of the same species with himself, that all his subjects firmly believed those persons, before whom he humbled himself in this manner, to be something more than human. Accordingly, as they marched through the crowd, the Spaniards frequently, and with much satisfaction, heard themselves denomi-

nated *Teules*, or divinities. Nothing material passed in this first interview. Montezuma conducted Cortes to the quarters which he had prepared for his reception, and immediately took leave of him, with a politeness not unworthy of a court more refined. "You are now," says he, "with your brothers in your own house; refresh yourselves after your fatigue, and be happy until I return."* The place allotted to the Spaniards for their lodging was a house built by the father of Montezuma. It was surrounded by a stone wall, with towers at proper distances, which served for defence as well as for ornament, and its apartments and courts were so large, as to accommodate both the Spaniards and their Indian allies. The first care of Cortes was to take precautions for his security, by planting the artillery so as to command the different avenues which led to it, by appointing a large division of his troops to be always on guard, and by posting sentinels at proper stations, with injunctions to observe the same vigilant discipline as if they were within sight of an enemy's camp.

His idea of the Spaniards.

In the evening, Montezuma returned to visit his guests with the same pomp as in their first

* Cortes, Relat. Ram. iii. 232—235. B. Diaz, c. 83—88. Gomara, Cron. c. 64, 65. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. vii. c. 3, 4, 5.

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interview, and brought presents of such value, not only to Cortes and to his officers, but even to the private men, as proved the liberality of the monarch to be suitable to the opulence of his kingdom. A long conference ensued, in which Cortes learned what was the opinion of Montezuma with respect to the Spaniards. It was an established tradition, he told him, among the Mexicans, that their ancestors came originally from a remote region, and conquered the provinces now subject to his dominion; that after they were settled there, the great captain who conducted this colony returned to his own country, promising, that at some future period his descendants should visit them, assume the government, and reform their constitution and laws; that from what he had heard and seen of Cortes and his followers, he was convinced that they were the very persons whose appearance the Mexican traditions and prophecies taught them to expect; that accordingly he had received them, not as strangers, but as relations of the same blood and parentage; and desired that they might consider themselves as masters in his dominions, for both himself and his subjects should be ready to comply with their will, and even to prevent their wishes. Cortes made a reply in his usual style, with respect to the dignity and power of his sovereign, and his intention in sending him into that country; artfully endeavouring so to

frame his discourse, that it might coincide as much as possible with the idea which Montezuma had formed concerning the origin of the Spaniards. Next morning, Cortes and some of his principal attendants were admitted to a public audience of the Emperor. The three subsequent days were employed in viewing the city; the appearance of which, so far superior in the order of its buildings and the number of its inhabitants to any place the Spaniards had beheld in America, and yet so little resembling the structure of an European city, filled them with surprise and admiration.

Mexico, or *Tenuchtitlan*, as it was anciently called by the natives, is situated in a large plain, environed by mountains of such height, that, though within the torrid zone, the temperature of its climate is mild and healthful. All the moisture which descends from the high grounds is collected in several lakes, the two largest of which, of about ninety miles in circuit, communicate with each other. The waters of the one are fresh, those of the other brackish. On the banks of the latter, and on some small islands adjoining to them, the capital of Montezuma's empire was built. The access to the city was by artificial causeways or streets formed of stones and earth, about thirty feet in breadth. As the waters of the lake during the rainy season overflowed the flat

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country, these causeways were of considerable length. That of Tacuba, on the west, extended a mile and a half; that of Tepeaca,* on the north-west, three miles; that of Cuoyacan, towards the south, six miles. On the east there was no causeway, and the city could be approached only by canoes.† In each of these causeways were openings at proper intervals, through which the waters flowed, and over these beams of timber were laid, which being covered with earth, the causeway or street had everywhere an uniform appearance. As the approaches to the city were singular, its construction was remarkable. Not only the temples of their gods, but the houses belonging to the monarch, and to persons of distinction, were of such dimensions, that, in comparison with any other buildings which had been hitherto discovered in America, they might be termed magnificent. The habitations of the com-

* I am indebted to M. Clavigero for correcting an error of importance in my description of Mexico. From the east, where Tezeuco was situated, there was no causeway, as I have observed, and yet by some inattention on my part, or on that of the printer, in all the former editions one of the causeways was said to lead to Tezeuco. M. Clavigero's measurement of the length of these causeways differs somewhat from that which I have adopted from F. Torribio. Clavig. ii. p. 72.

† F. Torribio. MS.

mon people were mean, resembling the huts of other Indians. But they were all placed in a regular manner, on the banks of the canals which passed through the city, in some of its districts, or on the sides of the streets which intersected it in other quarters. In several places were large openings or squares, one of which, allotted for the great market, is said to have been so spacious, that forty or fifty thousand persons carried on traffic there. In this city, the pride of the New World, and the noblest monument of the industry and art of man, while unacquainted with the use of iron, and destitute of aid from any domestic animal, the Spaniards who are most moderate in their computations reckon, that there were at least sixty thousand inhabitants.*

Their dangerous situation.

But how much soever the novelty of those objects might amuse or astonish the Spaniards, they felt the utmost solicitude with respect to their own situation. From a concurrence of circumstances, no less unexpected than favourable to their progress, they had been allowed to penetrate into the heart of a powerful kingdom, and were now lodged in its capital, without hav-

* Cortes, Relat. Ram. iii. 239. D. Relat. della gran Citta de Mexico, par un Gentelhuomo del Cortese. Ram. ibid. 304. E. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. vii. c. 14, &c.

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ing once met with open opposition from its monarch. The Tlascalans, however, had earnestly dissuaded them from placing such confidence in Montezuma as to enter a city of such peculiar situation as Mexico, where that prince would have them at mercy, shut up as it were in a snare, from which it was impossible to escape. They assured them that the Mexican priests had, in the name of the gods, counselled their sovereign to admit the Spaniards into the capital, that he might cut them off there at one blow with perfect security.* They now perceived too plainly, that the apprehensions of their allies were not destitute of foundation; that, by breaking the bridges placed at certain intervals on the causeways, or by destroying part of the causeways themselves, their retreat would be rendered impracticable, and they must remain cooped up in the centre of a hostile city, surrounded by multitudes sufficient to overwhelm them, and without a possibility of receiving aid from their allies. Montezuma had, indeed, received them with distinguished respect. But ought they to reckon upon this as real, or to consider it as feigned? Even if it were sincere, could they promise on its continuance? Their safety depended upon the will of a monarch in whose attachment they

* B. Diaz, c. 85, 86.

had no reason to confide; and an order flowing from his caprice, or a word uttered by him in passion, might decide irrevocably concerning their fate.*

Solicitude and perplexity of Cortes.

THESE reflections, so obvious as to occur to the meanest soldier, did not escape the vigilant sagacity of their general. Before he set out from Cholula, Cortes had received advice from Villa Rica,† that Qualpopoca, one of the Mexican generals on the frontiers, having assembled an army in order to attack some of the people whom the Spaniards had encouraged to throw off the Mexican yoke, Escalante had marched out with part of the garrison to support his allies; that an engagement had ensued, in which, though the Spaniards were victorious, Escalante, with seven of his men, had been mortally wounded, his horse killed, and one Spaniard had been surrounded by the enemy and taken alive; that the head of this unfortunate captive, after being carried in triumph to different cities, in order to convince the people that their invaders were not immortal, had been sent to Mexico.‡ Cortes, though alarmed with this

* B. Diaz, c. 94.

† Cortes, Relat. Ram. iii. 235. C.

‡ B. Diaz, c. 93, 94. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. viii. c. 1.

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intelligence, as an indication of Montezuma's hostile intentions, had continued his march. But as soon as he entered Mexico, he became sensible, that, from an excess of confidence in the superior valour and discipline of his troops, as well as from the disadvantage of having nothing to guide him in an unknown country, but the defective intelligence which he had received from people with whom his mode of communication was very imperfect, he had pushed forward into a situation, where it was difficult to continue, and from which it was dangerous to retire. Disgrace, and perhaps ruin, was the certain consequence of attempting the latter. The success of his enterprise depended upon supporting the high opinion which the people of New Spain had formed with respect to the irresistible power of his arms. Upon the first symptom of timidity on his part, their veneration would cease, and Montezuma, whom fear alone restrained at present, would let loose upon him the whole force of his empire. At the same time he knew, that the countenance of his own sovereign was to be obtained only by a series of victories, and that nothing but the merit of extraordinary success could screen his conduct from the censure of irregularity. From all these considerations, it was necessary to maintain his station, and to extricate himself out of the difficulties in which one bold step had involved him, by venturing upon another

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still bolder. The situation was trying, but his mind was equal to it; and after revolving the matter with deep attention, he fixed upon a plan no less extraordinary than daring. He determined to seize Montezuma in his palace, and to carry him as a prisoner to the Spanish quarters. From the superstitious veneration of the Mexicans for the person of their monarch, as well as their implicit submission to his will, he hoped, by having Montezuma in his power, to acquire the supreme direction of their affairs; or, at least, with such a sacred pledge in his hands, he made no doubt of being secure from any effort of their violence.

Resolves to seize Montezuma.

THIS he immediately proposed to his officers. The timid startled at a measure so audacious, and raised objections. The more intelligent and resolute, conscious that it was the only resource in which there appeared any prospect of safety, warmly approved of it, and brought over their companions so cordially to the same opinion, that it was agreed instantly to make the attempt. At his usual hour of visiting Montezuma, Cortes went to the palace, accompanied by Alvarado, Sandoval, Lugo, Velasquez de Leon, and Davila, five of his principal officers, and as many trusty soldiers. Thirty chosen men followed, not in regular order, but sauntering at some distance, as if they had no object but curiosity; small parties were posted

His manner of executing this.

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at proper intervals, in all the streets leading from the Spanish quarters to the court; and the remainder of his troops, with the Tlascalan allies, were under arms ready to sally out on the first alarm. Cortes and his attendants were admitted without suspicion; the Mexicans retiring, as usual, out of respect. He addressed the monarch in a tone very different from that which he had employed in former conferences, reproaching him bitterly as the author of the violent assault made upon the Spaniards by one of his officers, and demanded public reparation for the loss which they had sustained by the death of some of their companions, as well as for the insult offered to the great prince whose servants they were. Montezuma, confounded at this unexpected accusation, and changing colour, either from consciousness of guilt, or from feeling the indignity with which he was treated, asserted his own innocence with great earnestness, and, as a proof of it, gave orders instantly to bring Qualpopoca and his accomplices prisoners to Mexico. Cortes replied, with seeming complaisance, that a declaration so respectable left no doubt remaining in his own mind, but that something more was requisite to satisfy his followers, who would never be convinced that Montezuma did not harbour hostile intentions against them, unless, as an evidence of his confidence and attachment, he removed from his

own palace, and took up his residence in the Spanish quarters, where he should be served and honoured as became a great monarch. The first mention of so strange a proposal bereaved Montezuma of speech, and almost of motion. At length, indignation gave him utterance, and he haughtily answered, "That persons of his rank were not accustomed voluntarily to give up themselves as prisoners; and were he mean enough to do so, his subjects would not permit such an affront to be offered to their sovereign." Cortes, unwilling to employ force, endeavoured alternately to sooth and to intimidate him. The altercation became warm; and having continued above three hours, Velasquez de Leon, an impetuous and gallant young man, exclaimed with impatience, "Why waste more time in vain? Let us either seize him instantly, or stab him to the heart." The threatening voice and fierce gestures with which these words were uttered, struck Montezuma. The Spaniards, he was sensible, had now proceeded so far, as left him no hope that they would recede. His own danger was imminent, the necessity unavoidable. He saw both, and abandoning himself to his fate, complied with their request.

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Montezuma carried to the Spanish quarters.

His officers were called. He communicated to them his resolution. Though astonished and afflicted, they presumed not to question the will

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of their master, but carried him in silent pomp, all bathed in tears, to the Spanish quarters. When it was known that the strangers were conveying away the Emperor, the people broke out into the wildest transports of grief and rage, threatening the Spaniards with immediate destruction, as the punishment justly due to their impious audacity. But as soon as Montezuma appeared with a seeming gaiety of countenance, and waved his hand, the tumult was hushed; and upon his declaring it to be of his own choice that he went to reside for some time among his new friends, the multitude, taught to revere every intimation of their sovereign's pleasure, quietly dispersed.*

Thus was a powerful prince seized by a few strangers in the midst of his capital, at noonday, and carried off as a prisoner without opposition or bloodshed. History contains nothing parallel to this event, either with respect to the temerity of the attempt, or the success of the execution; and were not all the circumstances of this extraordinary transaction authenticated by the most unquestionable evidence, they would appear so wild and extravagant, as to go far beyond the bounds of that probability

* B. Diaz, c. 95. Gomara, Cron. c. 83. Cortes, Relat. Ram. iii. p. 235, 236. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. viii. c. 2, 3.

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which must be preserved even in fictitious narrations.

Received with apparent respect.

MONTEZUMA was received in the Spanish quarters with all the ceremonious respect which Cortes had promised. He was attended by his own domestics, and served with his usual state. His principal officers had free access to him, and he carried on every function of government as if he had been at perfect liberty. The Spaniards, however, watched him with the scrupulous vigilance which was natural in guarding such an important prize,* endeavouring at the same time to sooth and reconcile him to his situation, by every external demonstration of regard and attachment. But from captive princes the hour of humiliation and suffering is never far distant. Qualpopoca, his son, and five of the principal officers who served under him, were brought prisoners to the capital, in consequence of the orders which Montezuma had issued. The Emperor gave them up to Cortes, that he might inquire into the nature of their crime, and determine their punishment. They were formally tried by a Spanish court-martial; and though they had acted no other part than what became loyal subjects and brave men, in obeying the orders

Subjected to cruel indignities.

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* See NOTE LXXXIII. Page 422.

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of their lawful sovereign, and in opposing the invaders of their country, they were condemned to be burnt alive. The execution of such atrocious deeds is seldom long suspended. The unhappy victims were instantly led forth. The pile on which they were laid was composed of the weapons collected in the royal magazine for the public defence. An innumerable multitude of Mexicans beheld, in silent astonishment, the double insult offered to the majesty of their empire; an officer of distinction committed to the flames by the authority of strangers, for having done what he owed in duty to his natural sovereign; and the arms provided by the foresight of their ancestors for avenging public wrongs, consumed before their eyes.

But these were not the most shocking indignities which the Mexicans had to bear. The Spaniards, convinced that Qualpopoca would not have ventured to attack Escalante without orders from his master, were not satisfied with inflicting vengeance on the instrument employed in committing that crime, while the author of it escaped with impunity. Just before Qualpopoca was led out to suffer, Cortes entered the apartment of Montezuma, followed by some of his officers, and a soldier carrying a pair of fetters; and approaching the monarch with a stern countenance, told him, that as the

persons who were now to undergo the punishment which they merited, had charged him as the cause of the outrage committed, it was necessary that he likewise should make atonement for that guilt; then turning away abruptly, without waiting for a reply, commanded the soldiers to clap the fetters on his legs. The orders were instantly executed. The disconsolate monarch, trained up with an idea that his person was sacred and inviolable, and considering this profanation of it as the prelude of immediate death, broke out into loud lamentations and complaints. His attendants, speechless with horror, fell at his feet, bathing them with their tears; and bearing up the fetters in their hands, endeavoured with officious tenderness to lighten their pressure. Nor did their grief and despondency abate until Cortes returned from the execution, and with a cheerful countenance ordered the fetters to be taken off. As Montezuma's spirits had sunk with unmanly dejection, they now rose into indecent joy; and with an unbecoming transition, he passed at once from the anguish of despair, to transports of gratitude and expressions of fondness towards his deliverer.

Reasons of Cortes's conduct.

In those transactions, as represented by the Spanish historians, we search in vain for the qualities which distinguish other parts of Cortes's conduct. To usurp a jurisdiction which

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could not belong to a stranger, who assumed no higher character than that of an ambassador from a foreign prince, and, under colour of it, to inflict a capital punishment on men whose conduct entitled them to esteem, appears an act of barbarous cruelty. To put the monarch of a great kingdom in irons, and, after such ignominious treatment, suddenly to release him, seems to be a display of power no less inconsiderate than wanton. According to the common relation, no account can be given either of the one action or the other, but that Cortes, intoxicated with success, and presuming on the ascendant which he had acquired over the minds of the Mexicans, thought nothing too bold for him to undertake, or too dangerous to execute. But, in one view, these proceedings, however repugnant to justice and humanity, may have flowed from that artful policy which regulated every part of Cortes's behaviour towards the Mexicans. They had conceived the Spaniards to be an order of beings superior to men. It was of the utmost consequence to cherish this illusion, and to keep up the veneration which it inspired. Cortes wished that shedding the blood of a Spaniard should be deemed the most heinous of all crimes; and nothing appeared better calculated to establish this opinion, than to condemn the first Mexicans who had ventured to commit it to a cruel death, and to oblige their monarch him-

self to submit to a mortifying indignity, as an expiation for being accessory to a deed so atrocious.*

1520. The power which Cortes acquired.

THE rigour with which Cortes punished the unhappy persons who first presumed to lay violent hands upon his followers, seems accordingly to have made all the impression that he desired. The spirit of Montezuma was not only overawed, but subdued. During six months that Cortes remained in Mexico, the monarch continued in the Spanish quarters, with an appearance of as entire satisfaction and tranquillity, as if he had resided there not from constraint, but through choice. His ministers and officers attended him as usual. He took cognizance of all affairs; every order was issued in his name. The external aspect of government appearing the same, and all its ancient forms being scrupulously observed, the people were so little sensible of any change, that they obeyed the mandates of their monarch with the same submissive reverence as ever. Such was the dread which both Montezuma and his subjects had of the Spaniards, or such the veneration in which they held them, that no attempt was made to deliver their sovereign from confinement; and though Cortes, relying on this

* See NOTE LXXXIV. Page 423.

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ascendant which he had acquired over their minds, permitted him not only to visit his temples, but to make hunting excursions beyond the lake, a guard of a few Spaniards carried with it such a terror as to intimidate the multitude, and secure the captive monarch.*

THUS, by the fortunate temerity of Cortes in seizing Montezuma, the Spaniards at once secured to themselves more extensive authority in the Mexican empire than it was possible to have acquired in a long course of time by open force; and they exercised more absolute sway in the name of another than they could have done in their own. The arts of polished nations, in subjecting such as are less improved, have been nearly the same in every period. The system of screening a foreign usurpation, under the sanction of authority derived from the natural rulers of a country; the device of employing the magistrates and forms already established as instruments to introduce a new dominion, of which we are apt to boast as sublime refinements in policy peculiar to the present age, were inventions of a more early period, and had been tried with success in the West, long before they were practised in the East.

* Cortes, Relat. p. 296. E. B. Diaz, c. 97, 98, 99.

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Use which he makes of it.

CORTES availed himself to the utmost of the power which he possessed by being able to act in the name of Montezuma. He sent some Spaniards, whom he judged best qualified for such commissions, into different parts of the empire, accompanied by persons of distinction, whom Montezuma appointed to attend them both as guides and protectors. They visited most of the provinces, viewed their soil and productions, surveyed with particular care the districts which yielded gold or silver, pitched upon several places as proper stations for future colonies, and endeavoured to prepare the minds of the people for submitting to the Spanish yoke. While they were thus employed, Cortes, in the name and by the authority of Montezuma, degraded some of the principal officers in the empire, whose abilities or independent spirit excited his jealousy, and substituted in their place persons less capable or more obsequious.

ONE thing still was wanting to complete his security. He wished to have such command of the lake as might ensure a retreat, if, either from levity or disgust, the Mexicans should take arms against him, and break down the bridges or causeways. This, too, his own address, and the facility of Montezuma, enabled him to accomplish. Having frequently entertained his prisoner with pompous accounts of

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the European marine and art of navigation, he awakened his curiosity to see those moving palaces, which made their way through the water without oars. Under pretext of gratifying this desire, Cortes persuaded Montezuma to appoint some of his subjects to fetch part of the naval stores which the Spaniards had deposited at Vera Cruz to Mexico, and to employ others in cutting down and preparing timber. With their assistance, the Spanish carpenters soon completed two brigantines, which afforded a frivolous amusement to the monarch, and were considered by Cortes as a certain resource, if he should be obliged to retire.

Montezuma acknowledges himself a vassal of Spain.

ENCOURAGED by so many instances of the monarch's tame submission to his will, Cortes ventured to put it to a proof still more trying. He urged Montezuma to acknowledge himself a vassal of the King of Castile, to hold his crown of him as superior, and to subject his dominions to the payment of an annual tribute. With this requisition, the last and most humbling that can be made to one possessed of sovereign authority, Montezuma was so obsequious as to comply. He called together the chief men of his empire, and in a solemn harangue, reminding them of the traditions and prophecies which led them to expect the arrival of a people sprung from the same stock with themselves, in order to take possession of the supreme power,

he declared his belief that the Spaniards were this promised race; that therefore he recognized the right of their monarch to govern the Mexican empire; that he would lay his crown at his feet, and obey him as a tributary. While uttering these words, Montezuma discovered how deeply he was affected in making such a sacrifice. Tears and groans frequently interrupted his discourse. Overawed and broken as his spirit was, it still retained such a sense of dignity, as to feel that pang which pierces the heart of princes when constrained to resign independent power. The first mention of such a resolution struck the assembly dumb with astonishment. This was followed by a sudden murmur of sorrow, mingled with indignation, which indicated some violent eruption of rage to be near at hand. This Cortes foresaw, and seasonably interposed to prevent it, by declaring that his master had no intention to deprive Montezuma of the royal dignity, or to make any innovation upon the constitution and laws of the Mexican empire. This assurance, added to their dread of the Spanish power, and to the authority of their monarch's example, extorted a reluctant consent from the assembly.* The act of submission and homage was executed with all the for-

* See NOTE LXXXV. Page 424.

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malities which the Spaniards were pleased to prescribe.*

The amount of the treasure collected by the Spaniards.

MONTEZUMA, at the desire of Cortes, accompanied this profession of fealty and homage with a magnificent present to his new sovereign; and after his example, his subjects brought in very liberal contributions. The Spaniards now collected all the treasure which had been either voluntarily bestowed upon them at different times by Montezuma, or had been extorted from his people under various pretexts; and having melted the gold and silver, the value of these, without including jewels and ornaments of various kinds, which were preserved on account of their curious workmanship, amounted to six hundred thousand *pesos*. The soldiers were impatient to have it divided, and Cortes complied with their desire.

Division of it, and the discontent it occasioned.

A fifth of the whole was first set apart as the tax due to the King. Another fifth was allotted to Cortes as commander in chief. The sums advanced by Velasquez, by Cortes, and by some of the officers, towards defraying the expense of fitting out the armament, were then deducted. The remainder was divided among the army, including the garrison of Vera Cruz,

* Cortes, Relat. 238. D. B. Diaz, c. 101. Gomara, Cron. c. 92. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. x. c. 4.

in proportion to their different ranks. After so many defalcations, the share of a private man did not exceed a hundred pesos. This sum fell so far below their sanguine expectations, that some soldiers rejected it with scorn, and others murmured so loudly at this cruel disappointment of their hopes, that it required all the address of Cortes, and no small exertion of his liberality, to appease them. The complaints of the army were not altogether destitute of foundation. As the crown had contributed nothing towards the equipment or success of the armament, it was not without regret that the soldiers beheld it sweep away so great a proportion of the treasure purchased by their blood and toil. What fell to the share of the general appeared, according to the ideas of wealth in the sixteenth century, an enormous sum. Some of Cortes's favourites had secretly appropriated to their own use several ornaments of gold, which neither paid the royal fifth, nor were brought into account as part of the common stock. It was, however, so manifestly the interest of Cortes at this period to make a large remittance to the King, that it is highly probable those concealments were not of great consequence.

Reasons why gold was found in such small quantities.

THE total sum amassed by the Spaniards bears no proportion to the ideas which might be formed, either by reflecting on the descrip-

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tions given by historians of the ancient splendour of Mexico, or by considering the productions of its mines in modern times. But among the ancient Mexicans, gold and silver were not the standards by which the worth of other commodities was estimated; and, destitute of the artificial value derived from this circumstance, were no farther in request than as they furnished materials for ornaments and trinkets. These were either consecrated to the gods in their temples, or were worn as marks of distinction by their princes and some of their most eminent chiefs. As the consumption of the precious metals was inconsiderable, the demand for them was not such as to put either the ingenuity or industry of the Mexicans on the stretch, in order to augment their store. They were altogether unacquainted with the art of working the rich mines with which their country abounded. What gold they had was gathered in the beds of rivers, native, and ripened into a pure metallic state.* The utmost effort of their labour in search of it was to wash the earth carried down by torrents from the mountains, and to pick out the grains of gold which subsided; and even this simple operation, according to the report of the per-

* Cortes, Relat. p. 236. F. B. Diaz, c. 102, 103. Gomara, Cron. c. 90.

sons whom Cortes appointed to survey the provinces where there was a prospect of finding mines, they performed very unskilfully.* From all those causes, the whole mass of gold in possession of the Mexicans was not great. As silver is rarely found pure, and the Mexican art was too rude to conduct the process for refining it in a proper manner, the quantity of this metal was still less considerable.† Thus, though the Spaniards had exerted all the power which they possessed in Mexico, and often with indecent rapacity, in order to gratify their predominant passion, and though Montezuma had fondly exhausted his treasures, in hopes of satiating their thirst for gold, the product of both, which probably included a great part of the bullion in the empire, did not rise in value above what has been mentioned.‡

Montezuma inflexible with respect to religion.

But however pliant Montezuma might be in other matters, with respect to one point he was inflexible. Though Cortes often urged him, with the importunate zeal of a missionary, to renounce his false gods, and to embrace the Christian faith, he always rejected the proposition with horror. Superstition, among the Mexicans, was formed into such a regular and

* B. Diaz, c. 103. † Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ix. c. 4.

‡ See Note LXXXVI. Page 425.

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complete system, that its institutions naturally took fast hold of the mind; and while the rude tribes in other parts of America were easily induced to relinquish a few notions and rites, so loose and arbitrary as hardly to merit the name of a public religion, the Mexicans adhered tenaciously to their mode of worship, which, however barbarous, was accompanied with such order and solemnity as to render it an object of the highest veneration. Cortes, finding all his attempts ineffectual to shake the constancy of Montezuma, was so much enraged at his obstinacy, that in a transport of zeal he led out his soldiers to throw down the idols in the great temple by force. But the priests taking arms in defence of their altars, and the people crowding with great ardour to support them, Cortes's prudence overruled his zeal, and induced him to desist from his rash attempt, after dislodging the idols from one of the shrines, and placing in their stead an image of the Virgin Mary.*

Schemes of the Mexicans to destroy the Spaniards.

From that moment the Mexicans, who had permitted the imprisonment of their sovereign, and suffered the exactions of strangers without a struggle, began to meditate how they might expel or destroy the Spaniards, and thought

* See Note LXXXVII. Page 425.

themselves called upon to avenge their insulted deities. The priests and leading men held frequent consultations with Montezuma for this purpose. But as it might prove fatal to the captive monarch to attempt either the one or the other by violence, he was willing to try more gentle means. Having called Cortes into his presence, he observed, that now, as all the purposes of his embassy were fully accomplished, the gods had declared their will, and the people signified their desire, that he and his followers should instantly depart out of the empire. With this he required them to comply, or unavoidable destruction would fall suddenly on their heads. The tenour of this unexpected requisition, as well as the determined tone in which it was uttered, left Cortes no room to doubt that it was the result of some deep scheme concerted between Montezuma and his subjects. He quickly perceived, that he might derive more advantage from a seeming compliance with the monarch's inclination, than from an ill-timed attempt to change or to oppose it; and replied, with great composure, that he had already begun to prepare for returning to his own country; but as he had destroyed the vessels in which he arrived, some time was requisite for building other ships. This appeared reasonable. A number of Mexicans were sent to Vera Cruz to cut down timber, and some Spanish

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carpenters were appointed to superintend the work. Cortes flattered himself, that during this interval he might either find means to avert the threatened danger, or receive such reinforcements as would enable him to despise it.

Anxiety and danger of Cortes.

ALMOST nine months were elapsed since Portocarrero and Montejo had sailed with his despatches to Spain; and he daily expected their return with a confirmation of his authority from the King. Without this, his condition was insecure and precarious; and after all the great things which he had done, it might be his doom to bear the name and suffer the punishment of a traitor. Rapid and extensive as his progress had been, he could not hope to complete the reduction of a great empire with so small a body of men, which by this time diseases of various kinds had considerably thinned; nor could he apply for recruits to the Spanish settlements in the islands, until he received the royal approbation of his proceedings.

The arrival of a new armament,

WHILE he remained in this cruel situation, anxious about what was past, uncertain with respect to the future, and, by the late declaration of Montezuma, oppressed with a new addition of cares, a Mexican courier arrived with an account of some ships having appear-

ed on the coast. Cortes, with fond credulity, imagining that his messengers were returned from Spain, and that the completion of all his wishes and hopes was at hand, imparted the glad tidings to his companions, who received them with transports of mutual gratulation. Their joy was not of long continuance. A courier from Sandoval, whom Cortes had appointed to succeed Escalante in command at Vera Cruz, brought certain information that the armament was fitted out by Velasquez, governor of Cuba, and instead of bringing the aid which they expected, threatened them with immediate destruction. 1520.

fitted out by Velasquez,

The motives which prompted Velasquez to this violent measure are obvious. From the circumstances of Cortes's departure, it was impossible not to suspect his intention of throwing off all dependance upon him. His neglecting to transmit any account of his operations to Cuba, strengthened this suspicion, which was at last confirmed beyond doubt, by the indiscretion of the officers whom Cortes sent to Spain. They, from some motive which is not clearly explained by the contemporary historians, touched at the island of Cuba, contrary to the peremptory orders of their general.*

* B. Diaz, c. 54, 55. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 14. Gomara, Cron. c. 96.

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By this means Velasquez not only learned that Cortes and his followers, after formally renouncing all connexion with him, had established an independent colony in New Spain, and were soliciting the King to confirm their proceedings by his authority; but he obtained particular information concerning the opulence of the country, the valuable presents which Cortes had received, and the inviting prospects of success that opened to his view. Every passion which can agitate an ambitious mind; shame, at having been so grossly overreached; indignation, at being betrayed by the man whom he had selected as the object of his favour and confidence; grief, for having wasted his fortune to aggrandize an enemy; and despair of recovering so fair an opportunity of establishing his fame and extending his power, now raged in the bosom of Velasquez. All these, with united force, excited him to make an extraordinary effort, in order to be avenged on the author of his wrongs, and to wrest from him his usurped authority and conquests. Nor did he want the appearance of a good title to justify such an attempt. The agent whom he sent to Spain with an account of Grijalva's voyage, had met with a most favourable reception; and from the specimens which he produced, such high expectations were formed concerning the opulence of New Spain, that Velasquez was authorized to pro-

secute the discovery of the country, and appointed governor of it during life, with more extensive power and privileges than had been granted to any adventurer from the time of Columbus.* Elated by this distinguishing mark of favour, and warranted to consider Cortes not only as intruding upon his jurisdiction, but as disobedient to the royal mandate, he determined to vindicate his own rights, and the honour of his sovereign, by force of arms.† His ardour in carrying on his preparations was such as might have been expected from the violence of the passions with which he was animated; and in a short time an armament was completed, consisting of eighteen ships, which had on board fourscore horsemen, eight hundred foot soldiers, of which eighty were musketeers, and an hundred and twenty cross-bow men, together with a train of twelve pieces of cannon. As Velasquez's experience of the fatal consequence of committing to another what he ought to have executed himself, had not rendered him more enterprising, he vested the command of this formidable body, which, in the infancy of the Spanish power in America, merits the appellation of an army, in Pamphilo de Narvaez, with instructions to

under the command of Narvaez.

* Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iii. c. 11.

† See NOTE LXXXVIII. Page 426.

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seize Cortes and his principal officers, to send them prisoners to him, and then to complete the discovery and conquest of the country in his name.

NOTES

AND

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Note I. p. 4.

The height of the most elevated point in the Pyrenees is, according to M. Cassini, six thousand six hundred and forty-six feet. The height of the mountain Gemmi, in the canton of Berne, is ten thousand one hundred and ten feet. The height of the Peak of Teneriffe, according to the measurement of P. Feuillè, is thirteen thousand one hundred and seventy-eight feet. The height of Chimborazzo, the most elevated point of the Andes, is twenty thousand two hundred and eighty feet; no less than seven thousand one hundred and two feet above thehighest mountain in the ancient continent. Voyage de D. Juan Ulloa; Observations Astron. et Physiq. tom. ii. p. 114. The line of congelation on Chimborazzo, or that part of the mountain which is covered perpetually with snow, is no less than two thousand four hundred feet from its summit. Prevot. Hist. Gener. des Voyages, vol. xiii. p. 636.

Note II. p. 4.

As a particular description makes a stronger impression than general assertions, I shall give one of Rio de la Plata by an eye-witness, P. Cattaneo, a Modenese Jesuit, who landed at Buenos Ayres in 1749, and thus represents what he felt when such new objects were first presented to his view. "While I resided in Europe, and read in books of history or geography that the mouth of the river de la Plata was an hundred and fifty miles in breadth, I considered it as an exaggeration, because in this hemisphere we have no example of such vast rivers. When I approached its mouth, I had the most vehement desire to ascertain the truth with my own eyes; and I have found the matter to be exactly as it was represented. This I deduce particularly from one circumstance: When we took our departure from Monte-Video, a fort situated more than a hundred miles from the mouth of the river, and where its breadth is considerably diminished, we sailed a complete day before we discovered the land on the opposite bank of the river; and when we were in the middle of the channel, we could not discern land on either side, and saw nothing but the sky and water, as if we had been in some great ocean. Indeed we should have taken it to be sea, if the fresh water of the river, which was turbid like the Po, had not satisfied us that it was a river. Moreover, at Buenos Ayres, another hundred miles up the river, and where it is still much narrower, it is not only impossible to discern the opposite coast, which is indeed very low and flat, but one cannot perceive the houses or the tops of the steeples in the Portuguese settlement at Colonia

on the other side of the river." Lettera prima, published by Muratori, Il Christianesimo Felicè, &c. i. p. 257.

NOTE III. p. 8.

NEWFOUNDLAND, part of Nova Scotia, and Canada, are the countries which lie in the same parallel of latitude with the kingdom of France; and in every part of these the water of the rivers is frozen during winter to the thickness of several feet; the earth is covered with snow as deep; almost all the birds fly, during that season, from a climate where they could not live. The country of the Esquimaux, part of Labrador, and the countries on the south of Hudson's Bay, are in the same parallel with Great Britain; and yet in all these the cold is so intense, that even the industry of Europeans has not attempted cultivation.

NOTE IV. p. 11.

ACOSTA is the first philosopher, as far as I know, who endeavoured to account for the different degrees of heat in the old and new continents, by the agency of the winds which blow in each. Hist. Moral. &c. lib. ii. and iii. M. de Buffon adopts this theory, and has not only improved it by new observations, but has employed his amazing powers of descriptive eloquence in embellishing and placing it in the most striking light. Some remarks may be added, which tend to illustrate more fully a doctrine of much importance

in every inquiry concerning the temperature of various climates.

When a cold wind blows over land, it must in its passage rob the surface of some of its heat. By means of this, the coldness of the wind is abated. But if it continue to blow in the same direction, it will come, by degrees, to pass over a surface already cooled, and will suffer no longer any abatement of its own keenness. Thus, as it advances over a large tract of land, it brings on all the severity of intense frost.

Let the same wind blow over an extensive and deep sea; the superficial water must be *immediately* cooled to a certain degree, and the wind proportionally warmed. But the superficial and colder water becoming specifically heavier than the warmer water below it, descends; what is warmer supplies its place, which, as it comes to be cooled in its turn, continues to warm the air which passes over it, or to diminish its cold. This change of the superficial water and successive ascent of that which is warmer, and the consequent successive abatement of coldness in the air, is aided by the agitation caused in the sea by the mechanical action of the wind, and also by the motion of the tides. This will go on, and the rigour of the wind will continue to diminish, until the whole water is so far cooled that the water on the surface is no longer removed from the action of the wind, fast enough to hinder it from being arrested by frost. Whenever the surface freezes, the wind is no longer warmed by the water from below, and it goes on with undiminished cold.

From those principles may be explained the severity of winter frosts in extensive continents; their mildness in small islands; and the superior rigour of winter in those parts of North America with which we are best acquainted. In the north-west parts of Europe, the severity of winter is mitigated by the west winds, which usually blow in the months of November, December, and part of January.

On the other hand, when a warm wind blows over land, it heats the surface, which must therefore cease to abate the fervour of the wind. But the same wind blowing over water, agitates it, brings up the colder water from below, and thus is continually losing somewhat of its own heat.

But the great power of the sea to mitigate the heat of the wind or air passing over it, proceeds from the following circumstance;—that on account of the transparency of the sea, its surface cannot be heated to a great degree by the sun's rays; whereas the ground, subjected to their influence, very soon acquires great heat. When, therefore, the wind blows over a torrid continent, it is soon raised to a heat almost intolerable; but during its passage over an extensive ocean, it is gradually cooled; so that on its arrival at the farthest shore, it is again fit for respiration.

Those principles will account for the sultry heats of large continents in the torrid zone; for the mild climate of islands in the same latitude; and for the superior warmth in summer which large continents, situated in the temperate or colder zones of the earth, enjoy, when compared with that of islands. The

heat of a climate depends not only upon the immediate effect of the sun's rays, but on their continued operation on the effect which they have formerly produced, and which remains for some time in the ground. This is the reason why the day is warmest about two in the afternoon, the summer warmest about the middle of July, and the winter coldest about the middle of January.

THE forests which cover America, and hinder the sunbeams from heating the ground, are a great cause of the temperate climate in the equatorial parts. The ground not being heated, cannot heat the air; and the leaves, which receive the rays intercepted from the ground, have not a mass of matter sufficient to absorb heat enough for this purpose. Besides, it is a known fact, that the vegetative power of a plant occasions a perspiration from the leaves in proportion to the heat to which they are exposed; and, from the nature of evaporation, this perspiration produces a cold in the leaf proportional to the perspiration. Thus the effect of the leaf in heating the air in contact with it, is prodigiously diminished. For those observations, which throw much additional light on this curious subject, I am indebted to my ingenious friend, Mr Robison, professor of natural philosophy in the university of Edinburgh.

NOTE V. p. 11.

THE climate of Brasil has been described by two eminent naturalists, Piso and Margrave, who observed it with a philosophical accuracy for which we search

in vain in the accounts of many other provinces in America. Both represent it as temperate and mild, when compared with the climate of Africa. They ascribe this chiefly to the refreshing wind which blows continually from the sea. The air is not only cool, but chilly through the night, in so much that the natives kindle fires every evening in their huts; Piso de Medicina Brasiliensi, lib. i. p. 1. &c. Margravius Histor. Rerum Natural. Brasiliæ, lib. viii. c. 3. p. 264. Nieuhoff, who resided long in Brasil, confirms their description; Churchill's Collection, vol. ii. p. 26. Gumilla, who was a missionary many years among the Indians upon the river Orinoco, gives a similar description of the temperature of the climate there; Hist. de l'Orenoque, tom. i. p. 26. P. Acugna felt a very considerable degree of cold in the countries on the banks of the river Amazons; Relat. vol. ii. p. 56. M. Biet, who lived a considerable time in Cayenne, gives a similar account of the temperature of that climate, and ascribes it to the same cause; Voyage de la France Equinox, p. 330. Nothing can be more different from these descriptions than that of the burning heat of the African coast given by M. Adanson; Voyage to Senegal, passim.

Note VI. p. 13.

Two French frigates were sent upon a voyage of discovery in the year 1739. In latitude 44° south, they began to feel a considerable degree of cold. In latitude 48°, they met with islands of floating ice; Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes, tom. ii. p. 256, &c. Dr Halley fell in with ice in latitude 59°;

Id. tom. i. p. 47. Commodore Byron, when on the coast of Patagonia, latitude 50° 33′ south, on the fifteenth of December, which is midsummer in that part of the globe, the twenty-first of December being the longest day there, compares the climate to that of England in the middle of winter; Voyages by Hawkesworth, i. 25. Mr Banks having landed on Terra del Fuego, in the Bay of Good Success, latitude 55°, on the sixteenth of January, which corresponds to the month of July in our hemisphere, two of his attendants died in one night of extreme cold, and all the party were in the most imminent danger of perishing; Id. ii. 51, 52. By the fourteenth of March, corresponding to September in our hemisphere, winter was set in with rigour, and the mountains were covered with snow; Ibid. 72. Captain Cook, in his voyage towards the South Pole, furnishes new and striking instances of the extraordinary predominance of cold in this region of the globe. "Who would have thought (says he) that an island of no greater extent than seventy leagues in circuit, situated between the latitude of 54° and 55°, should, in the very height of summer, be in a manner wholly covered, many fathoms deep, with frozen snow; but more especially the S. W. coast? The very summits of the lofty mountains were cased with snow and ice; but the quantity that lay in the valleys is incredible; and at the bottom of the bays the coast was terminated by a wall of ice of considerable height;" Vol. ii. p. 217.

In some places of the ancient continent, an extraordinary degree of cold prevails in very low latitudes. Mr Bogle, in his embassy to the court of the Delai Lama, passed the winter of the year 1774 at Cham-

nanning, in latitude 31° 39′ N. He often found the thermometer in his room twenty-nine degrees under the freezing point by Fahrenheit's scale; and in the middle of April the standing waters were all frozen, and heavy showers of snow frequently fell. The extraordinary elevation of the country seems to be the cause of this excessive cold. In travelling from Indostan to Thibet, the ascent to the summit of the Boutan mountains is very great, but the descent on the other side is not in equal proportion. The kingdom of Thibet is an elevated region, extremely bare and desolate; Account of Thibet, by Mr Stewart, read in the Royal Society, p. 7. The extraordinary cold in low latitudes in America cannot be accounted for by the same cause. Those regions are not remarkable for elevation. Some of them are countries depressed and level.

THE most obvious and probable cause of the superior degree of cold towards the southern extremity of America, seems to be the form of the continent there. Its breadth gradually decreases as it stretches from St Antonio southwards, and from the Bay of St Julian to the Straits of Magellan its dimensions are much contracted. On the east and west sides it is washed by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. From its southern point it is probable that a great extent of sea, without any considerable tract of land, reaches to the Antarctic pole. In whichever of these directions the wind blows, it is cooled before it approaches the Magellanic regions by passing over a vast body of water; nor is the land there of such extent, that it can recover any considerable degree of heat in its progress over it. These circumstances concur in rendering the temperature of

the air in this district of America more similar to that of an insular, than to that of a continental climate, and hinder it from acquiring the same degree of summer heat with places in Europe and Asia in a corresponding northern latitude. The north wind is the only one that reaches this part of America, after blowing over a great continent. But from an attentive survey of its position, this will be found to have a tendency rather to diminish than augment the degree of heat. The southern extremity of America is properly the termination of the immense ridge of the Andes, which stretches nearly in a direct line from north to south, through the whole extent of the continent. The most sultry regions in South America, Guiana, Brasil, Paraguay, and Tucuman, lie many degrees to the east of the Magellanic regions. The level country of Peru, which enjoys the tropical heats, is situated considerably to the west of them. The north wind then, though it blows over land, does not bring to the southern extremity of America an increase of heat collected in its passage over torrid regions; but before it arrives there, it must have swept along the summits of the Andes, and comes impregnated with the cold of that frozen region.

THOUGH it be now demonstrated that there is no southern continent in that region of the globe which it was supposed to occupy, it appears to be certain from Captain Cook's discoveries, that there is a large tract of land near the south pole, which is the source of most of the ice spread over the vast Southern Ocean; Vol. ii. p. 230. 239, &c. Whether the influence of this remote frozen continent may reach the southern

extremity of America, and affect its climate, is an inquiry not unworthy of attention.

Note VII. p. 16.

M. Condamine is one of the latest and most accurate observers of the interior state of South America. "After descending from the Andes, (says he), one beholds a vast and uniform prospect of water and verdure, and nothing more. One treads upon the earth, but does not see it; as it is so entirely covered with luxuriant plants, weeds, and shrubs, that it would require a considerable degree of labour to clear it for the space of a foot;" Relation abrégé d'un Voyage, &c. p. 48. One of the singularities in the forests is a sort of osiers, or withes, called *bejucos* by the Spaniards, *lianes* by the French, and *nibbes* by the Indians, which are usually employed as ropes in America. This is one of the parasitical plants, which twists about the trees it meets with, and rising above their highest branches, its tendrils descend perpendicularly, strike into the ground, take root, rise up around another tree, and thus mount and descend alternately. Other tendrils are carried obliquely by the wind, or some accident, and form a confusion of interwoven cordage, which resembles the rigging of a ship; Bancroft, Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 99. These withes are often as thick as the arm of a man; Ib. p. 75. M. Bouguer's account of the forests in Peru, perfectly resembles this description; Voyage au Peru, p. 16. Oviedo gives a similar description of the forests in other parts of America; Hist. lib. ix. p. 144. D. The country of the Moxos is so much overflowed, that they are obliged to reside on the

summit of some rising ground during some part of the year, and have no communication with their countrymen at any distance; Lettres Edifiantes, tom. x. p. 187. Garcia gives a full and just description of the rivers, lakes, woods, and marshes, in those countries of America which lie between the tropics; Origen de los Indios, lib. ii. c. 5. § 4, 5. The incredible hardships to which Gonzalez Pizarro was exposed in attempting to march into the country to the east of the Andes, convey a very striking idea of that part of America in its original uncultivated state; Garcil. de la Vega, Royal. Comment. of Peru, part ii. book iii. c. 2—5.

NOTE VIII. p. 19.

THE animals of America seem not to have been always of a size inferior to those in other quarters of the globe. From antlers of the moose-deer which have been found in America, it appears to have been an animal of great size. Near the banks of the Ohio, a considerable number of bones of an immense magnitude have been found. The place where this discovery has been made lies about one hundred and ninety miles below the junction of the river Scioto with the Ohio. It is about four miles distant from the banks of the latter, on the side of the marsh called the Salt Lick. The bones lie in vast quantities about five or six feet under ground, and the stratum is visible in the bank on the edge of the Lick; *Journal of Colonel George Croglan, MS. penes me.* This spot seems to be accurately laid down by Evans in his map. These bones must have belonged to animals of enormous bulk; and naturalists being acquainted with no living creature of

such size, were at first inclined to think that they were mineral substances. Upon receiving a greater number of specimens, and after inspecting them more narrowly, they are now allowed to be the bones of an animal. As the elephant is the largest known quadruped, and the tusks which were found nearly resembled, both in form and quality, the tusks of an elephant, it was concluded that the carcases deposited on the Ohio were of that species. But Dr Hunter, one of the persons of our age best qualified to decide with respect to this point, having accurately examined several parcels of tusks, and grinders, and jaw-bones, sent from the Ohio to London, gives it as his opinion, that they did not belong to an elephant, but to some huge carnivorous animal of an unknown species; Phil. Transact. vol. lviii. p. 34. Bones of the same kind, and as remarkable for their size, have been found near the mouths of the great rivers Oby, Jeniseia, and Lena, in Siberia; *Stralhrenberg, Description of North and East Parts of Europe and Asia*, p. 402, &c. The elephant seems to be confined in his range to the torrid zone, and never multiplies beyond it. In such cold regions as those bordering on the Frozen Sea, he could not live. The existence of such large animals in America might open a wide field for conjecture. The more we contemplate the face of nature, and consider the variety of her productions, the more we must be satisfied, that astonishing changes have been made in the terraqueous globe by convulsions and revolutions, of which no account is preserved in history.

Note IX. p. 20.

This degeneracy of the domestic European animals in America may be imputed to some of these causes. In the Spanish settlements, which are situated either within the torrid zone, or in countries bordering upon it, the increase of heat, and diversity of food, prevent sheep and horned cattle from attaining the same size as in Europe. They seldom become so fat, and their flesh is not so juicy, or of such delicate flavour. In North America, where the climate is more favourable, and similar to that of Europe, the quality of the grasses which spring up naturally in their pasture-grounds is not good; *Mitchell*, p. *151*. Agriculture is still so much in its infancy, that artificial food for cattle is not raised in any quantity. During a winter, long in many provinces, and rigorous in all, no proper care is taken of their cattle. The general treatment of their horses and horned cattle is injudicious and harsh in all the English colonies. These circumstances contribute more, perhaps, than any thing peculiar in the quality of the climate, to the degeneracy of breed in the horses, cows, and sheep, of many of the North American provinces.

Note X. p. 21.

In the year 1518, the island of Hispaniola was afflicted with a dreadful visitation of those destructive insects, the particulars of which Herrera describes, and mentions a singular instance of the superstition of the Spanish planters. After trying various methods

of exterminating the ants, they resolved to implore protection of the saints; but as the calamity was new, they were at a loss to find out the saint who could give them the most effectual aid. They cast lots in order to discover the patron whom they should invoke. The lots decided in favour of St Saturninus. They celebrated his festival with great solemnity, and immediately, adds the historian, the calamity began to abate; Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iii. c. 15. p. 107.

Note XI. p. 24.

The author of Recherches Philosophiques sur les Americains, supposes this difference in heat to be equal to twelve degrees, and that a place thirty degrees from the equator in the old continent is as warm as one situated eighteen degrees from it in America, tom. i. p. 11. Dr Mitchell, after observations carried on during thirty years, contends that the difference is equal to fourteen or fifteen degrees of latitude; Present State, &c. p. 257.

Note XII. p. 24.

January 3d, 1765, Mr Bertram, near the head of St John's river, in East Florida, observed a frost so intense, that in one night the ground was frozen an inch thick upon the banks of the river. The limes, citrons, and banana trees, at St Augustin, were destroyed; Bertram's Journal, p. 20. Other instances of the extraordinary operations of cold in the southern provinces of North America, are collected by Dr

Mitchell; Present State, p. 206, &c. February 7th, 1747, the frost at Charlestown was so intense, that a person having carried two quart bottles of hot water to bed, in the morning they were split to pieces, and the water converted into solid lumps of ice. In a kitchen, where there was a fire, the water in a jar, in which there was a large live eel, was frozen to the bottom. Almost all the orange and olive trees were destroyed; Description of South Carolina, 8vo. Lond. 1761.

Note XIII. p. 25.

A remarkable instance of this occurs in Dutch Guiana, a country everywhere level, and so low, that during the rainy seasons it is usually covered with water near two feet in height. This renders the soil so rich, that on the surface, for twelve inches in depth, it is a stratum of perfect manure, and as such has been transported to Barbadoes. On the banks of the Essequebo, thirty crops of ratan canes have been raised successively; whereas in the West-Indian islands not more than two is ever expected from the richest land. The expedients by which the planters endeavour to diminish this excessive fertility of soil are various; Bancroft, Nat. Hist. of Guiana, p. 10, &c.

Note XIV. p. 39.

Muller seems to have believed, without sufficient evidence, that the Cape had been doubled, tom. i. p. 11, &c.; and the Imperial Academy of St Peters-

burgh give some countenance to it, by the manner in which *Tschukotskoi-noss* is laid down in their charts. But I am assured, from undoubted authority, that no Russian vessel has ever sailed round that cape; and as the country of *Tschutki* is not subject to the Russian empire, it is very imperfectly known.

Note XV. p. 42.

Were this the place for entering into a long and intricate geographical disquisition, many curious observations might arise from comparing the accounts of the two Russian voyages and the charts of their respective navigations. One remark is applicable to both. We cannot rely with absolute certainty on the position which they assign to several of the places which they visited. The weather was so extremely foggy, that they seldom saw the sun or stars; and the position of the islands and supposed continents was commonly determined by reckoning, not by observation. Behring and Tschirikow proceeded much farther towards the east than Krenitzin. The land discovered by Behring, which he imagined to be part of the American continent, is in the 236th degree of longitude from the first meridian in the Isle of Ferro, and in 58° 28′ of latitude. Tschirikow came upon the same coast in longit. 241°, latit. 56°; Muller, i. 248, 249. The former must have advanced 60 degrees from the Port of Petropawlowski, from which he took his departure, and the latter 65 degrees. But from the chart of Krenitzin's voyage, it appears that he did not sail farther towards the east than the 208th degree, and only 32 degrees from Petropawlowski. In 1741, Beh

ring and Tschirikow, both in going and returning, held a course which was mostly to the south of that chain of islands which they discovered; and observing the mountainous and rugged aspect of the head-lands which they descried towards the north, they supposed them to be promontories belonging to some part of the American continent, which, as they fancied, stretched as far south as the latitude 56. In this manner they are laid down in the chart published by Muller, and likewise in a manuscript chart drawn by a mate of Behring's ship, communicated to me by Mr Professor Robison. But in 1769 Krenitzin, after wintering in the island Alaxa, stood so far towards the north in his return, that his course lay through the middle of what Behring and Tschirikow had supposed to be a continent, which he found to be an open sea, and that they had mistaken rocky isles for the head-lands of a continent. It is probable, that the countries discovered in 1741, towards the east, do not belong to the American continent, but are only a continuation of the chain of islands. The number of volcanoes in this region of the globe is remarkable. There are several in Kamtchatka, and not one of the islands, great or small, as far as the Russian navigation extends, is without them. Many are actually burning, and the mountains in all bear marks of having been once in a state of eruption. Were I disposed to admit such conjectures as have found place in other inquiries concerning the peopling of America, I might suppose that this part of the earth having manifestly suffered violent convulsions from earthquakes and volcanoes, an isthmus, which may have formerly united Asia to America, has been broken, and formed into a cluster of islands by the shock.

It is singular, that at the very time the Russian navigators were attempting to make discoveries in the north-west of America, the Spaniards were prosecuting the same design from another quarter. In 1769, two small vessels sailed from Loretto in California to explore the coasts of the country to the north of that peninsula. They advanced no farther than the port of Monte-Rey in latitude 36. But, in several successive expeditions fitted out from the port of St Blas in New Galicia, the Spaniards have advanced as far as the latitude 58; *Gazeta de Madrid*, March 19. and May 14. 1776. But as the journals of those voyages have not yet been published, I cannot compare their progress with that of the Russians, or shew how near the navigators of the two nations have approached to each other. It is to be hoped, that the enlightened minister who has now the direction of American affairs in Spain, will not withhold this information from the public.

Note XVI. p. 44.

Our knowledge of the vicinity of the two continents of Asia and America, which was very imperfect when I published the History of America in the year 1777, is now complete. Mr Coxe's Account of the Russian Discoveries between Asia and America, printed in the year 1780, contains many curious and important facts with respect to the various attempts of the Russians to open a communication with the New World. The history of the great Voyage of Discovery, begun by Captain Cook in 1776, and completed by Captains

Clerk and Gore, published in the year 1780, communicates all the information that the curiosity of mankind could desire with regard to this subject.

At my request, my friend Mr Playfair, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Edinburgh, has compared the narrative and charts of those illustrious navigators, with the more imperfect relations and maps of the Russians. The result of this comparison I communicate in his own words, with much greater confidence in his scientific accuracy, than I could have ventured to place in any observations which I myself might have made upon the subject.

"The discoveries of Captain Cook in his last voyage have confirmed the conclusions which Dr Robertson had drawn, and have connected together the facts from which they were deduced. They have now rendered it certain that Behring and Tschirikow touched on the coast of America in 1741. The former discovered land in lat. 58° 28′, and about 236° east from Ferro. He has given such a description of the Bay in which he anchored, and the high mountain to the westward of it, which he calls St Elias, that though the account of his voyage is much abridged in the English translation, Captain Cook recognized the place as he sailed along the western coast of America in the year 1778. The Isle of St Hermogenes, near the mouth of Cook's River, Schumagin's Isles on the coast of Alashka, and Foggy Isle, retain in Captain Cook's chart the names which they had received from the Russian navigator; Cook's Voy. vol. ii. p. 347.

"TSCHIRIKOW came upon the same coast about 2° 30′ farther south than Behring, near the Mount-Edgecumbe of Captain Cook.

"WITH regard to Krenitzin, we learn from Coxe's Account of the Russian Discoveries, that he sailed from the mouth of the Kamtchatka river with two ships in the year 1768. With his own ship he reached the island Oonolashka, in which there had been a Russian settlement since the year 1762, where he wintered, probably in the same harbour or bay where Captain Cook afterwards anchored. The other ship wintered at Alashka, which was supposed to be an island, though it be in fact a part of the American continent. Krenitzin accordingly returned without knowing that either of his ships had been on the coast of America; and this is the more surprising, because Captain Cook has informed us that Alashka is understood to be a great continent, both by the Russians and the natives at Oonolashka.

"ACCORDING to Krenitzin, the ship which had wintered at Alashka had hardly sailed 32° to the eastward of the harbour of St Peter and St Paul in Kamtchatka; but, according to the more accurate charts of Captain Cook, it had sailed no less than 37° 17′ to the eastward of that harbour. There is nearly the same mistake of 5° in the longitude which Krenitzin assigns to Oonolashka. It is remarkable enough, that in the chart of those seas put into the hand of Captain Cook by the Russians on that island, there was an error of the same kind, and very nearly of the same extent.

"But what is of most consequence to be remarked on the subject is, that the discoveries of Captain Cook have fully verified Dr Robertson's conjecture, "that it is probable that future navigators in those seas, by steering farther to the north than Behring and Tschirikow or Krenitzin had done, may find that the continent of America approaches still nearer to that of Asia;" Vol. ii. p. 43. It has accordingly been found that these two continents, which in the parallel of 55°, or that of the southern extremity of Alashka, are about four hundred leagues asunder, approach continually to one another as they stretch together toward the north, until, within less than a degree from the polar circle, they are terminated by two capes, only thirteen leagues distant. The east cape of Asia is in latitude 66° 6′, and in longitude 190° 22′ east from Greenwich; the western extremity of America, or Prince of Wales' Cape, is in latitude 65° 46′, and in longitude 191° 45′. Nearly in the middle of the narrow strait (Behring's Strait) which separates these capes, are the two islands of St Diomede, from which both continents may be seen. Captain King informs us, that as he was sailing through this strait, July 5. 1779, the fog having cleared away, he enjoyed the pleasure of seeing from the ship the continents of Asia and America at the same moment, together with the islands of St Diomede lying between them; Cook's Voy. vol. iii. p. 244.

"Beyond this point the strait opens towards the Arctic Sea, and the coasts of Asia and America diverge so fast from one another, that in the parallel of 69° they are more than one hundred leagues asunder; Ib. p. 277. To the south of the strait there are a number of islands, Clerk's, King's, Anderson's, &c. which, as

well as those of St Diomede, may have facilitated the migrations of the natives from the one continent to the other. Captain Cook, however, on the authority of the Russians at Oonolashka, and for other good reasons, has diminished the number of islands which had been inserted in former charts of the northern Archipelago. He has also placed Alashka, or the promontory which stretches from the continent of America S. W. towards Kamtchatka, at the distance of five degrees of longitude farther from the coast of Asia than it was reckoned by the Russian navigators.

"The geography of the Old and New World is therefore equally indebted to the discoveries made in this memorable voyage; and as many errors have been corrected, and many deficiencies supplied by means of these discoveries, so the accuracy of some former observations has been established. The basis of the map of the Russian empire, as far as regarded Kamtchatka and the country of the Tschutzki, was the position of four places, Yakutsh, Ochotz, Bolcheresk, and Petropawlowski, which had been determined by the astronomer Krassilnicow in the year 1744; Nov. Comment. Petrop. vol. iii. p. 465, &c. But the accuracy of his observations was contested by M. Engel, and M. Robert de Vaugondy; Coxe, Append. i. No. 2. p. 267. 272; and the former of these geographers ventured to take away no less than 28 degrees from the longitude which, on the faith of Krassilnicow's observations, was assigned to the eastern boundary of the Russian empire. With how little reason this was done, will appear from considering that our British navigators, having determined the position of Petropawlowski by a great number of very accurate observations, found the longitude of that

port 158° 43′ E. from Greenwich, and its latitude 53° 1′; agreeing, the first to less than seven minutes, and the second to less than half a minute, with the calculations of the Russian astronomer: a coincidence which, in the situation of so remote a place, does not leave an uncertainty of more than four English miles, and which, for the credit of science, deserves to be particularly remarked. The chief error in the Russian maps has been, in not extending the boundaries of that empire sufficiently towards the east. For as there was nothing to connect the land of the Tschutzki and the north-east point of Asia with those places whereof the position had been carefully ascertained, except the imperfect accounts of Behring's and Synd's voyages, considerable errors could not fail to be introduced, and that point was laid down as not more than 23° 2′ east of the meridian of Petropawlowski; Coxe, App. i. No. 2. By the observations of Captain King, the difference of longitude between Petropawlowski and the East Cape is 31° 9′; that is, 8° 7′ greater than it was supposed to be by the Russian geographers."—It appears from Cook's and King's Voy. iii. p. 272. that the continents of Asia and America are usually joined together by ice during winter. Mr Samwell confirms this account of his superior officer. "At this place, viz. near the latitude of 66° N. the two coasts are only thirteen leagues asunder, and about midway between them lie two islands, the distance from which to either shore is short of twenty miles. At this place the natives of Asia could find no difficulty in passing over to the opposite coast, which is in sight of their own. That in a course of years such an event would happen, either through design or accident, cannot admit of a doubt. The canoes which we saw among the Tschutzki were

capable of performing a much longer voyage; and, however rude they may have been at some distant period, we can scarcely suppose them unequal to a passage of six or seven leagues. People might have been carried over by accident on floating pieces of ice. They might also have travelled across on sledges or on foot; for we have reason to believe that the strait is entirely frozen over in the winter; so that, during that season, the continents, with respect to the communication between them, may be considered as one land;" Letter from Mr Samwell, Scots Magazine for 1788, p. 604. It is probable that this interesting portion of geographical knowledge will, in the course of a few years, receive farther improvement. Soon after the publication of Captain Cook's last voyage, the great and enlightened Sovereign of Russia, attentive to every thing that may contribute to extend the bounds of science, or to render it more accurate, formed the plan of a new voyage of discovery, in order to explore those parts of the ocean lying between Asia and America which Captain Cook did not visit, to examine more accurately the islands which stretch from one continent almost to the other, to survey the north-east coast of the Russian empire, from the mouth of the Kovyma or Kolyma, to the North Cape, and to settle, by astronomical observations, the position of each place worth notice. The conduct of this important enterprise is committed to Captain Billings, an English officer in the Russian service, of whose abilities for that station it will be deemed the best evidence, that he accompanied Captain Cook in his last voyage. To render the expedition more extensively useful, an eminent naturalist is appointed to attend Captain Billings. Six years will be requisite for accomplishing the pur-

poses of the voyage; Coxe, Supplement to Russian Discoveries, p. 27, &c.

Note XVII. p. 60.

Few travellers have had such opportunity of observing the natives of America, in its various districts, as Don Antonio Ulloa. In a work lately published by him, he thus describes the characteristical features of the race: "A very small forehead, covered with hair towards its extremities, as far as the middle of the eyebrows; little eyes; a thin nose, small and bending towards the upper lip; the countenance broad; the ears large; the hair very black, lank, and coarse; the limbs well turned, the feet small, the body of just proportion, and altogether smooth and free from hair, until old age, when they acquire some beard, but never on the cheeks;" Noticias Americanas, &c. p. 307. M. le Chevalier de Pinto, who resided several years in a part of America which Ulloa never visited, gives a sketch of the general aspect of the Indians there. "They are all of copper colour, with some diversity of shade, not in proportion to their distance from the equator, but according to the degree of elevation of the territory which they inhabit. Those who live in a high country are fairer than those in the marshy low lands on the coast. Their face is round, farther removed, perhaps, than that of any people from an oval shape. Their forehead is small, the extremity of their ears far from the face, their lips thick, their nose flat, their eyes black, or of a chesnut colour, small, but capable of discerning objects at a great distance. Their hair is always thick and sleek, and without any

tendency to curl. They have no hair on any part of their body but the head. At the first aspect, a Southern American appears to be mild and innocent, but on a more attentive view, one discovers in his countenance something wild, distrustful, and sullen;" MS. *penes me.* The two portraits, drawn by hands very different from those of common travellers, have a near resemblance.

Note XVIII. p. 61.

Amazing accounts are given of the persevering speed of the Americans. Adair relates the adventures of a Chikkasah warrior, who run through woods and over mountains, three hundred computed miles, in a day and a half and two nights; Hist. of Amer. Ind. 396.

Note XIX. p. 67.

M. Godin le Jeune, who resided fifteen years among the Indians of Peru and Quito, and twenty years in the French colony of Cayenne, in which there is a constant intercourse with the Galibis and other tribes on the Orinoco, observes, that the vigour of constitution among the Americans is exactly in proportion to their habits of labour. The Indians, in warm climates, such as those on the coasts of the South Sea, on the river of Amazons, and the river Orinoco, are not to be compared for strength with those in cold countries; and yet, says he, boats daily set out from Para, a Portuguese settlement on the

river Amazons, to ascend that river against the rapidity of the stream, and with the same crew they proceed to San Pablo, which is eight hundred leagues distant. No crew of white people, or even of negroes, would be found equal to a task of such persevering fatigue, as the Portuguese have experienced, and yet the Indians, being accustomed to this labour from their infancy, perform it; MS. *penes me.*

Note XX. p. 75.

Don Antonio Ulloa, who visited a great part of Peru and Chili, the kingdom of New Granada, and several of the provinces bordering on the Mexican Gulf, while employed in the same service with the French mathematicians during the space of ten years, and who afterwards had an opportunity of viewing the North Americans, asserts, "that if we have seen one American, we may be said to have seen them all, their colour and make are so nearly the same;" Notic. Americanas, p. 308. A more early observer, Pedro de Cieca de Leon, one of the conquerors of Peru, who had likewise traversed many provinces of America, affirms, that the people, men and women, although there is such a multitude of tribes or nations as to be almost innumerable, and such diversity of climates, appear nevertheless like the children of one father and mother; Chronica del' Peru, parte i. c. 19. There is, no doubt, a certain combination of features, and peculiarity of aspect, which forms what may be called an European or Asiatic countenance. There must likewise be one that may be denominated American, common to the whole race. This may be supposed to

strike the traveller at first sight, while not only the various shades which distinguish people of different regions, but the peculiar features which discriminate individuals, escape the notice of a transient observer. But when persons who had resided so long among the Americans concur in bearing testimony to the similarity of their appearance in every climate, we may conclude that it is more remarkable than that of any other race. See likewise Garcia, Origen de los Indios, p. 54. 242. Torquemada, Monarch. Indiana, ii. 571.

Note XXI. p. 78.

M. le Chevalier de Pinto observes, that, in the interior parts of Brasil, he had been informed that some persons resembling the white people of Darien have been found; but that the breed did not continue, and their children became like other Americans. This race, however, is very imperfectly known; MS. *penes me.*

Note XXII. p. 81.

The testimonies of different travellers concerning the Patagonians, have been collected and stated with a considerable degree of accuracy by the author of Recherches Philosophiques, &c. tom. i. 281, &c. iii. 181, &c. Since the publication of his work, several navigators have visited the Magellanic regions, and, like their predecessors, differ very widely in their accounts of its inhabitants. By Commodore Byron and his crew, who sailed through the Straits in 1764, the

common size of the Patagonians was estimated to be eight feet, and many of them much taller; Philos. Transact. vol. lvii. p. 78. By Captains Wallis and Carteret, who actually measured them in 1766, they were found to be from six feet to six feet five and seven inches in height; Phil. Trans. vol. lx. p. 22. These, however, seem to have been the very people whose size had been rated so high in the year 1764; for several of them had beads and red baize of the same kind with what had been put on board Captain Wallis's ship, and he naturally concluded that they had got these from Mr Byron; Hawkesw. i. In 1767 they were again measured by M. Bougainville, whose account differs little from that of Captain Wallis; Voy. 129. To these I shall add a testimony of great weight. In the year 1762, Don Bernardo Ibegnez de Echavarri accompanied the Marquis de Valdèlirios to Buenos Ayres, and resided there several years. He is a very intelligent author, and his reputation for veracity unimpeached among his countrymen. In speaking of the country towards the southern extremity of America, "By what Indians," says he, "is it possessed? Not certainly by the fabulous Patagonians, who are supposed to occupy this district. I have from many eye-witnesses, who have lived among those Indians, and traded much with them, a true and accurate description of their persons. They are of the same stature with Spaniards. I never saw one who rose in height two *varas* and two or three inches," *i.e.* about 80 or 81.332 inches English, if Echavarri makes his computation according to the *vara* of Madrid. This agrees nearly with the measurement of Captain Wallis; Reyno Jesuitico, 238. Mr Falkner, who resided as a missionary forty years in the southern parts of

America, says, that "the Patagonians, or Puelches, are a large-bodied people; but I never heard of that gigantic race which others have mentioned, though I have seen persons of all the different tribes of Southern Indians;" Introd. p. 26. M. Dobrizhoffer, a Jesuit, who resided eighteen years in Paraguay, and who had seen great numbers of the various tribes which inhabit the countries situated upon the Straits of Magellan, confirms, in every point, the testimony of his brother-missionary Falkner. Dobrizhoffer enters into some detail with respect to the opinions of several authors, concerning the stature of the Patagonians. Having mentioned the reports of some early travellers with regard to the extraordinary size of some bones found on that coast, which were supposed to be human, and having endeavoured to shew that these bones belonged to some large marine or land animal, he concludes, "de hisce ossibus crede quicquid libuerit, dummodo, me suasore, Patagones pro gigantibus desinas habere;" Historia de Abissonibus, vol. ii. p. 19, &c.

Note XXIII. p. 86.

Antonio Sanchez Ribeiro, a learned and ingenious physician, published a dissertation in the year 1765, in which he endeavours to prove, that this disease was not introduced from America, but took its rise in Europe, and was brought on by an epidemical and malignant disorder. Did I choose to enter into a disquisition on this subject, which I should not have mentioned if it had not been intimately connected with this part of my inquiries, it would not be difficult to point out some mistakes with respect to the facts

upon which he founds, as well as some errors in the consequences which he draws from them. The rapid communication of this disease from Spain over Europe, seems however to resemble the progress of an epidemic, rather than that of a disease transmitted by infection. The first mention of it is in the year 1493, and before the year 1497 it had made its appearance in most countries of Europe, with such alarming symptoms as rendered it necessary for the civil magistrate to interpose, in order to check its career.—Since the publication of this work, a second edition of Dr Sanchez's Dissertation has been communicated to me. It contains several additional facts in confirmation of his opinion, which is supported with such plausible arguments, as render it a subject of inquiry well deserving the attention of learned physicians.

Note XXIV. p. 91.

The people of Otaheite have no denomination for any number above two hundred, which is sufficient for their transactions; Voyages by Hawkesworth, ii. 228.

Note XXV. p. 98.

As the view which I have given of rude nations is extremely different from that exhibited by very respectable authors, it may be proper to produce some of the many authorities on which I found my description. The manners of the savage tribes in America have never been viewed by persons more capable of ob-

serving them with discernment, than the philosophers employed by France and Spain, in the year 1735, to determine the figure of the earth. M. Bouguer, D. Antonio d'Ulloa, and D. Jorge Juan, resided long among the natives of the least civilized provinces in Peru. M. de la Condamine had not only the same advantages with them for observation, but, in his voyage down the Maragnon, he had an opportunity of inspecting the state of the various nations seated on its banks, in its vast course across the continent of South America. There is a wonderful resemblance in their representation of the character of the Americans. "They are all extremely indolent," says M. Bouguer; "they are stupid; they pass whole days sitting in the same place, without moving, or speaking a single word. It is not easy to describe the degree of their indifference for wealth and all its advantages. One does not well know what motive to propose to them, when one would persuade them to perform any service. It is vain to offer them money; they answer, that they are not hungry;" Voyage au Perou, p. 102. "If one considers them as men, the narrowness of their understanding seems to be incompatible with the excellence of the soul. Their imbecility is so visible, that one can hardly form an idea of them different from what one has of the brutes. Nothing disturbs the tranquillity of their souls, equally insensible to disasters and to prosperity. Though half-naked, they are as contented as a monarch in his most splendid array. Riches do not attract them in the smallest degree, and the authority or dignities to which they may aspire are so little the objects of their ambition, that an Indian will receive with the same indifference the office of a judge (alcade) or that of a hangman, if deprived of the former and ap-

pointed to the latter. Nothing can move or change them. Interest has no power over them, and they often refuse to perform a small service, though certain of a great recompense. Fear makes no impression upon them, and respect as little. Their disposition is so singular that there is no method of influencing them, no means of rousing them from that indifference which is proof against all the endeavours of the wisest persons; no expedient which can induce them to abandon that gross ignorance, or lay aside that careless negligence, which disconcert the prudence and disappoint the care of such as are attentive to their welfare;" Voyage d'Ulloa, tom. i. 335. 336. Of those singular qualities he produces many extraordinary instances, p. 336—347. "Insensibility," says M. de la Condamine, "is the basis of the American character. I leave others to determine, whether this should be dignified with the name of apathy, or disgraced with that of stupidity. It arises, without doubt, from the small number of their ideas, which do not extend beyond their wants. Gluttons even to voracity, when they have wherewithal to satisfy their appetite. Temperate, when necessity obliges them, to such a degree, that they can endure want without seeming to desire any thing. Pusillanimous and cowardly to excess, unless when they are rendered desperate by drunkenness. Averse to labour, indifferent to every motive of glory, honour, or gratitude; occupied entirely by the object that is present, and always determined by it alone, without any solicitude about futurity; incapable of foresight or of reflection; abandoning themselves, when under no restraint, to a puerile joy, which they express by frisking about, and immoderate fits of laughter; without object or design, they pass their life without thinking, and grow

old without advancing beyond childhood, of which they retain all the defects. If this description were applicable only to the Indians in some provinces of Peru, who are slaves in every respect but the name, one might believe, that this degree of degeneracy was occasioned by the servile dependence to which they are reduced; the example of the modern Greeks being proof how far servitude may degrade the human species. But the Indians in the missions of the Jesuits, and the savages who still enjoy unimpaired liberty, being as limited in their faculties, not to say as stupid as the other, one cannot observe, without humiliation, that man, when abandoned to simple nature, and deprived of the advantages resulting from education and society, differs but little from the brute creation;" Voyage de la Riv. de Amaz. 52, 53. M. de Chanvalon, an intelligent and philosophical observer, who visited Martinico in 1751, and resided there six years, gives the following description of the Caraibs: "It is not the red colour of their complexion, it is not the singularity of their features, which constitutes the chief difference between them and us. It is their excessive simplicity; it is the limited degree of their faculties. Their reason is not more enlightened or more provident than the instinct of brutes. The reason of the most gross peasants, that of the negroes brought up in the parts of Africa most remote from intercourse with Europeans, is such, that we discover appearances of intelligence, which, though imperfect, is capable of increase. But of this the understanding of the Caraibs seems to be hardly susceptible. If sound philosophy and religion did not afford us their light, if we were to decide according to the first impression which the view of that people makes upon the mind, we should be dis-

posed to believe that they do not belong to the same species with us. Their stupid eyes are the true mirror of their souls; it appears to be without functions. Their indolence is extreme; they have never the least solicitude about the moment which is to succeed that which is present;" Voyage à la Martinique, p. 44, 45. 51. M. de la Borde, Tertre, and Rochefort, confirm this description. "The characteristics of the Californians," says P. Venegas, "as well as of all other Indians, are stupidity and insensibility; want of knowledge and reflection; inconstancy, impetuosity, and blindness of appetite; an excessive sloth, and abhorrence of all labour and fatigue; an excessive love of pleasure and amusement of every kind, however trifling or brutal; pusillanimity; and, in fine, a most wretched want of every thing which constitutes the real man, and renders him rational, inventive, tractable, and useful to himself and society. It is not easy for Europeans, who never were out of their own country, to conceive an adequate idea of those people; for, even in the least frequented corners of the globe, there is not a nation so stupid, of such contracted ideas, and so weak both in body and mind, as the unhappy Californians. Their understanding comprehends little more than what they see; abstract ideas, and much less a chain of reasoning, being far beyond their power; so that they scarce ever improve their first ideas, and these are in general false or at least inadequate. It is in vain to represent to them any future advantages which will result to them from doing or abstaining from this or that particular immediately present; the relation of means and ends being beyond the stretch of their faculties. Nor have they the least notion of pursuing such intentions as will procure themselves some future good, or

guard them against future evils. Their will is proportional to their faculties, and all their passions move in a very narrow sphere. Ambition they have none, and are more desirous of being accounted strong than valiant. The objects of ambition with us, honour, fame, reputation, titles, posts, and distinctions of superiority, are unknown among them; so that this powerful spring of action, the cause of so much seeming good and real evil in the world, has no power here. This disposition of mind, as it gives them up to an amazing languor and lassitude, their lives fleeting away in a perpetual inactivity and detestation of labour, so it likewise induces them to be attracted by the first object which their own fancy, or the persuasion of another, places before them; and at the same time renders them as prone to alter their resolutions with the same facility. They look with indifference upon any kindness done them; nor is even the bare remembrance of it to be expected from them. In a word, the unhappy mortals may be compared to children, in whom the developement of reason is not completed. They may indeed be called a nation who never arrive at manhood;" Hist. of California, Engl. Transl. i. 64. 67. Mr Ellis gives a similar account of the want of foresight and inconsiderate disposition of the people adjacent to Hudson's Bay; Voyage, p. 194, 195.

THE incapacity of the Americans is so remarkable, that negroes from all the different provinces of Africa are observed to be more capable of improving by instruction. They acquire the knowledge of several particulars which the Americans cannot comprehend. Hence the negroes, though slaves, value themselves as a superior order of beings, and look down upon the

Americans with contempt, as void of capacity and of rational discernment; Ulloa, Notic. Americ. 322, 323.

Note XXVI. p. 105.

Dobrizhoffer, the last traveller I know who has resided among any tribe of the ruder Americans, has explained so fully the various reasons which have induced their women to suckle their children long, and never to undertake rearing such as were feeble or distorted, and even to destroy a considerable number of their offspring, as to throw great light on the observations I have made, p. 71, 72; Hist. de Abissonibus, vol. ii. p. 107. 221. So deeply were these ideas imprinted in the minds of the Americans, that the Peruvians, a civilized people, when compared with the barbarous tribes whose manners I am describing, retained them; and even their intercourse with the Spaniards has not been able to root them out. When twins are born in any family, it is still considered as an ominous event, and the parents have recourse to rigorous acts of mortification, in order to avert the calamities with which they are threatened. When a child is born with any deformity, they will not, if they can possibly avoid it, bring it to be baptized, and it is with difficulty they can be brought to rear it; Arriaga, Extirpac. de la Idolat. del Peru, p. 32, 33.

Note XXVII. p. 111.

The number of the fish in the rivers of South America is so extraordinary, as to merit particular

notice. "In the Maragnon (says P. Acugna) fish are so plentiful, that, without any art, they may take them with the hands;" p. 138. "In the Orinoco (says P. Gumilla), besides an infinite variety of other fish, tortoise or turtle abound in such numbers, that I cannot find words to express it. I doubt not but that such as read my account will accuse me of exaggeration; but I can affirm that it is as difficult to count them, as to count the sands on the banks of that river. One may judge of their number by the amazing consumption of them; for all the nations contiguous to the river, and even many who are at a distance, flock thither at the season of breeding, and not only find sustenance during that time, but carry off great numbers both of the turtles and of their eggs," &c. Hist. de l'Orenoque, ii. c. 22. p. 59. M. de la Condamine confirms their accounts, p. 159.

Note XXVIII. p. 111.

Piso describes two of these plants, the *Curuuape*, and the *Guajana-Timbo*. It is remarkable, that though they have this fatal effect upon fishes, they are so far from being noxious to the human species, that they are used in medicine with success. Piso, lib. iv. c. 88. Bancroft mentions another, the *Hiarree*, a small quantity of which is sufficient to inebriate all the fish to a considerable distance, so that in a few minutes they float motionless on the surface of the water, and are taken with ease. Nat. Hist. of Guiana, p. 106.

Note XXIX. p. 115.

Remarkable instances occur of the calamities which rude nations suffer by famine. Alvar Nugnez Cabeca de Vaca, one of the most gallant and virtuous of the Spanish adventurers, resided almost nine years among the savages of Florida. They were unacquainted with every species of agriculture. Their subsistence was poor and precarious. "They live chiefly (says he) upon roots of different plants, which they procure with great difficulty, wandering from place to place in search of them. Sometimes they kill game, sometimes they catch fish, but in such small quantities, that their hunger is so extreme as compels them to eat spiders, the eggs of ants, worms, lizards, serpents, a kind of unctuous earth; and I am persuaded, that if in this country there were any stones, they would swallow these. They preserve the bones of fishes and serpents, which they grind into powder, and eat. The only season when they do not suffer much from famine, is when a certain fruit, which he calls *Tunas*, is ripe. This is the same with the *Opuntia*, or prickly pear, of a reddish and yellow colour, with a sweet insipid taste. They are sometimes obliged to travel far from their usual place of residence, in order to find them;" Naufragios, c. xviii. p. 20, 21, 22. In another place he observes, that they are frequently reduced to pass two or three days without food, c. xxiv. p. 27.

Note XXX. p. 117.

M. Fermin has given an accurate description of the two species of manioc, with an account of its culture,

to which he has added some experiments, in order to ascertain the poisonous qualities of the juice extracted from that species which he calls *the bitter cassava*. Among the Spaniards, it is known by the name of *Yuca brava*. Descr. de Surin. tom. i. p. 66.

NOTE XXXI. p. 117.

THE plantain is found in Asia and Africa, as well as in America. Oviedo contends, that it is not an indigenous plant of the New World, but was introduced into the island of Hispaniola, in the year 1516, by Father Thomas de Berlanga, and that he transplanted it from the Canary Islands, whither the original slips had been brought from the East-Indies. Oviedo, lib. viii. c. 1. But the opinion of Acosta and other naturalists, who reckon it an American plant, seems to be better founded. Acosta, Hist. Nat. lib. iv. 21. It was cultivated by rude tribes in America, who had little intercourse with the Spaniards, and who were destitute of that ingenuity which disposes men to borrow what is useful from foreign nations. Gumilla, iii. 186. Wafer's Voyage, p. 87.

NOTE XXXII. p. 119.

IT is remarkable, that Acosta, one of the most accurate and best informed writers concerning the West-Indies, affirms, that maize, though cultivated on the continent, was not known in the islands, the inhabitants of which had none but cassada bread. Hist. Nat. lib. iv. c. 16. But P. Martyr, in the first book of

his first Decad, which was written in the year 1493, upon the return of Columbus from his first voyage, expressly mentions maize as a plant which the islanders cultivated, and of which they made bread, p. 7. Gomara likewise asserts, that they were acquainted with the culture of maize. Hist. Gener. cap. 28. Oviedo describes maize without any intimation of its being a plant that was not natural to Hispaniola. Lib. vii. c. 1.

Note XXXIII. p. 127.

New Holland, a country which formerly was only known, has lately been visited by intelligent observers. It lies in a region of the globe where it must enjoy a very favourable climate, as it stretches from the 10th to the 38th degree of northern latitude. It is of great extent, and from its square form must be much more than equal to all Europe. The people who inhabit the various parts of it appear to be of one race. They are evidently ruder than most of the Americans, and have made still less progress in improvement and the arts of life. There is not the least appearance of cultivation in any part of this vast region. The inhabitants are extremely few, so that the country appears almost desolate. Their tribes are still more inconsiderable than those of America. They depend for subsistence almost entirely on fishing. They do not settle in one place, but roam about in quest of food. Both sexes go stark-naked. Their habitations, utensils, &c. are more simple and rude than those of the Americans. Voyages, by Hawkesworth, iii. 622, &c. This, perhaps, is the country where man has been discovered in the earliest stage of his progress; and it exhibits a

miserable specimen of his condition and powers in that uncultivated state. If this country shall be more fully explored by future navigators, the comparison of the manners of its inhabitants with those of the Americans will prove an instructive article in the history of the human species.

Note XXXIV. p. 127.

P. Gabriel Marest, who travelled from his station among the Illinois to Machillimakinac, thus describes the face of the country:—"We have marched twelve days without meeting a single human creature. Sometimes we found ourselves in vast meadows, of which we could not see the boundaries, through which there flowed many brooks and rivers, but without any path to conduct us. Sometimes we were obliged to open a passage across thick forests, through bushes and underwood filled with briers and thorns. Sometimes we had to pass through deep marshes, in which we sunk up to the middle. After being fatigued through the day, we had the earth for our bed, or a few leaves, exposed to the wind, the rain, and all the injuries of the air;" Lettr. Edifiantes, ii. 360. Dr Brickell, in an excursion from North Carolina towards the mountains, A. D. 1730, travelled fifteen days without meeting with a human creature. Nat. Hist. of North Carolina, 389. Diego de Ordas, in attempting to make a settlement in South America, A. D. 1532, marched fifty days through a country without one inhabitant. Herrera, dec. 5. lib. i. c. 11.

NOTE XXXV. p. 129.

I STRONGLY suspect that a community of goods, and an undivided store, are known only among the rudest tribes of hunters; and that as soon as any species of agriculture or regular industry is known, the idea of an exclusive right of property to the fruits of them is introduced. I am confirmed in this opinion by accounts which I have received concerning the state of property among the Indians in very different regions of America. "The idea of the natives of Brasil concerning property is, that if any person cultivate a field, he alone ought to enjoy the produce of it, and no other has a title to pretend to it. If an individual or family go a-hunting or fishing, what is caught belongs to the individual or to the family, and they communicate no part of it to any but to their cazique, or to such of their kindred as happen to be indisposed. If any person in the village come to their hut, he may sit down freely, and eat without asking liberty. But this is the consequence of their general principle of hospitality; for I never observed any partition of the increase of their fields, or the produce of the chase, which I could consider as the result of any idea concerning a community of goods. On the contrary, they are so much attached to what they deem to be their property, that it would be extremely dangerous to encroach upon it. As far as I have seen or can learn, there is not one tribe of Indians in South America, among whom that community of goods which has been so highly extolled is known. The circumstance in the government of the Jesuits, most irksome to the Indians of Paraguay, was the community of goods which those fathers intro-

duced. This was repugnant to the original ideas of the Indians. They were acquainted with the rights of private exclusive property, and they submitted with impatience to regulations which destroyed them;" M. le Cheval. de Pinto, MS. *penes me.* "Actual possession (says a missionary who resided several years among the Indians of the Five Nations) gives a right to the soil, but whenever a possessor sees fit to quit it, another has as good right to take it as he who left it. This law, or custom, respects not only the particular spot on which he erects his house, but also his planting ground. If a man has prepared a particular spot of ground, on which he designs in future to build or plant, no man has a right to incommode him, much less to the fruit of his labours, until it appears that he voluntarily gives up his views. But I never heard of any formal conveyance from one Indian to another in their natural state. The limits of every canton are circumscribed; that is, they are allowed to hunt as far as such a river on this hand, and such a mountain on the other. This area is occupied and improved by individuals and their families. Individuals, not the community, have the use and profit of their own labours, or success in hunting;" MS. of Mr Gideon Hawley, *penes me.*

NOTE XXXVI. p. 131.

THIS difference of temper between the Americans and negroes is so remarkable, that it is a proverbial saying in the French islands, "Regarder un sauvage de travers, c'est le battre; le battre, c'est le tuer; battre un negre, c'est le nourrir;" Tertre, ii. 490.

Note XXXVII. p. 132.

The description of the political state of the people of Cinaloa perfectly resembles that of the inhabitants of North America. "They have neither laws nor kings (says a missionary who resided long among them) to punish any crime. Nor is there among them any species of authority, or political government, to restrain them in any part of their conduct. It is true, that they acknowledge certain caziques, who are heads of their families or villages, but their authority appears chiefly in war, and the expeditions against their enemies. This authority the caziques obtain not by hereditary right, but by their valour in war, or by the power and number of their families and relations. Sometimes they owe their pre-eminence to their eloquence in displaying their own exploits;" Ribas, Hist. de las Triumph. &c. p. 11. The state of the Chiquitos in South America is nearly the same. "They have no regular form of government or civil life, but in matters of public concern they listen to the advice of their old men, and usually follow it. The dignity of cazique is not hereditary, but conferred according to merit, as the reward of valour in war. The union among them is imperfect. Their society resembles a republic without any head, in which every man is master of himself, and, upon the least disgust, separates from those with whom he seemed to be connected;" Relacion Historical de las Missiones de los Chiquitos, por P. Juan Patr. Fernandez, p. 32, 33. Thus, under very different climates, when nations are in a similar state of society, their institutions and civil government assume the same form.

Note XXXVIII. p. 149.

"I have known the Indians (says a person well acquainted with their mode of life) to go a thousand miles for the purpose of revenge, in pathless woods, over hills and mountains, through huge cane-swamps, exposed to the extremities of heat and cold, the vicissitude of seasons, to hunger and thirst. Such is their over-boiling revengeful temper, that they utterly contemn all those things as imaginary trifles, if they are so happy as to get the scalp of the murderer, or enemy, to satisfy the craving ghosts of their deceased relations;" Adair's Hist. of Amer. Indians, p. 150.

Note XXXIX. p. 149.

In the account of the great war between the Algonquins and Iroquois, the achievements of Piskaret, a famous chief of the Algonquins, performed mostly by himself alone, or with one or two companions, make a capital figure. De la Potherie, i. 297, &c. Colden's Hist. of Five Nations, 125, &c.

Note XL. p. 153.

The life of an unfortunate leader is often in danger, and he is always degraded from the rank which he had acquired by his former exploits. Adair, p. 388.

Note XLI. p. 153.

As the ideas of the North Americans, with respect to the mode of carrying on war, are generally known, I have founded my observations chiefly upon the testimony of the authors who describe them. But the same maxims took place among other nations in the New World. A judicious missionary has given a view of the military operations of the people in Gran Chaco, in South America, perfectly similar to those of the Iroquois. "They are much addicted to war (says he), which they carry on frequently among themselves, but perpetually against the Spaniards. But they may rather be called thieves than soldiers, for they never make head against the Spaniards, unless when they can assault them by stealth, or have guarded against any mischance by spies, who may be called indefatigable. They will watch the settlements of the Spaniards for one, two, or three years, observing by night every thing that passes with the utmost solicitude, whether they may expect resistance or not, and until they are perfectly secure of the event, they will not venture upon an attack; so that when they do give the assault, they are certain of success, and free from all danger. These spies, in order that they may not be observed, will creep on all-four like cats in the night; but if they are discovered, make their escape with much dexterity. But, although they never choose to face the Spaniards, if they be surrounded in any place whence they cannot escape, they will fight with desperate valour, and sell their lives very dear;" Lozano, Descript. del Gran Chaco, p. 78.

Note XLII. p. 155.

Lery, who was an eye-witness of the proceedings of the *Toupinambos*, a Brasilian tribe, in a war against a powerful nation of their enemies, describes their courage and ferocity in very striking terms. Ego cum Gallo altero, paulo curiosius, magno nostro periculo (si enim ab hostibus capti aut lesi fuissemus, devorationi fuissemus devoti), barbaros nostros in militiam euntes comitari volui. Hi, numero 4000 capita, cum hostibus ad littus decertârunt, tanta ferocitate, ut vel rabidos et furiosos quosque superarent. Cum primum hostes conspexere, in magnos atque editos ululatus perruperunt. Hæc gens adeo fera est et truculenta, ut tantisper dum virium vel tantillum restat, continuo dimicent, fugamque nunquam capessant. Quod a natura illis inditum esse reor. Testor interea me, qui non semel, tum peditum tum equitum copias ingentes, in aciem instructas hic conspexi, tanta nunquam voluptate videndis peditum legionibus armis fulgentibus, quanta tum pugnantibus istis percussum fuisse, Lery, Hist. Navigat. in Brasil. ap. de Bry, iii. 207, 208, 209.

Note XLIII. p. 156.

It was originally the practice of the Americans, as well as of other savage nations, to cut off the heads of the enemies whom they slew, and to carry them away as trophies. But, as they found these cumbersome in their retreat, which they always make very rapidly, and often through a vast extent of country, they became satisfied with tearing off their scalps. This

custom, though most prevalent in North America, was not unknown among the southern tribes. Lozano, p. 79.

Note XLIV. p. 162.

The terms of the war-song seem to be dictated by the same fierce spirit of revenge. "I go to war to revenge the death of my brothers; I shall kill; I shall exterminate; I shall burn my enemies; I shall bring away slaves; I shall devour their heart, dry their flesh, drink their blood; I shall tear off their scalps, and make cups of their skulls." Bossu's Travels through Louisiana, vol. i. p. 102. I am informed, by persons on whose testimony I can rely, that as the number of people in the Indian tribes has decreased so much, almost none of their prisoners are now put to death. It is considered as better policy to spare and to adopt them. Those dreadful scenes which I have described occur now so rarely, that missionaries and traders who have resided long among the Indians, never were witnesses to them.

Note XLV. p. 162.

All the travellers who have visited the most uncivilized of the American tribes agree in this. It is confirmed by two remarkable circumstances, which occurred in the conquest of different provinces. In the expedition of Narvaez into Florida in the year 1528, the Spaniards were reduced to such extreme distress by famine, that, in order to preserve their own lives,

they ate such of their companions as happened to die. This appeared so shocking to the natives, who were accustomed to devour none but prisoners, that it filled them with horror and indignation against the Spaniards. Torquemada, Monarch. Ind. ii. p. 584. Naufragios de Alv. Nugnez Cabeca de Vaca, c. xiv. p. 15. During the siege of Mexico, though the Mexicans devoured with greediness the Spaniards and Tlascalans whom they took prisoners, the utmost rigour of the famine which they suffered could not induce them to touch the dead bodies of their own countrymen. Bern. Diaz del Castillo, Conquist. de la N. Espagna, p. 156.

Note XLVI. p. 164.

Many singular circumstances concerning the treatment of prisoners among the people of Brasil, are contained in the narrative of Stadius, a German officer in the service of the Portuguese, published in the year 1556. He was taken prisoner by the *Toupinambos*, and remained in captivity nine years. He was often present at those horrid festivals which he describes, and was destined himself to the same cruel fate with other prisoners. But he saved his life by extraordinary efforts of courage and address. De Bry, iii. p. 34, &c. M. de Lery, who accompanied M. de Villagagnon in his expedition to Brasil, in the year 1556, and who resided some time in that country, agrees with Stadius in every circumstance of importance. He was frequently an eye-witness of the manner in which the Brasilians treated their prisoners. De Bry, iii. 210. Several striking particulars omitted by them, are men-

tioned by a Portuguese author. Purchas, Pilgr. iv. 1294, &c.

Note XLVII. p. 168.

Though I have followed that opinion concerning the apathy of the Americans, which appeared to me most rational, and supported by the authority of the most respectable authors, other theories have been formed with regard to it, by writers of great eminence. D. Ant. Ulloa, in a late work, contends that the texture of the skin and bodily habit of the Americans is such, that they are less sensible of pain than the rest of mankind. He produces several proofs of this, from the manner in which they endure the most cruel chirurgical operations, &c. Noticias Americanas, p. 313, 314. The same observation has been made by surgeons in Brasil. An Indian, they say, never complains under pain, and will bear the amputation of a leg or arm without uttering a single groan. MS. *penes me.*

Note XLVIII. p. 170.

This is an idea natural to all rude nations. Among the Romans, in the early periods of their commonwealth, it was a maxim that a prisoner, "tum decessisse videtur cum captus est." Digest. lib. xlix. tit. 15. c. 18. And afterwards, when the progress of refinement rendered them more indulgent with respect to this article, they were obliged to employ two fictions of law to secure the property, and permit the return of a cap-

tive; the one by the Lex Cornelia, and the other by the Jus Postliminii. Heinec. Elem. Jur. Civ. sec. ord. Pand. ii. p. 294. Among the negroes the same ideas prevail. No ransom was ever accepted for a prisoner. As soon as one is taken in war, he is reputed to be dead; and he is so in effect to his country and his family. Voy. du Cheval. des Marchais, i. p. 369.

Note XLIX. p. 172.

The people of Chili, the most gallant and high-spirited of all the Americans, are the only exception to this observation. They attack their enemies in the open field; their troops are ranged in regular order; their battalions advance to the charge, not only with courage, but with discipline. The North Americans, though many of them have substituted the European fire-arms in place of their own bows and arrows, still adhere to their ancient maxims of war, and carry it on according to their own peculiar system. But the Chilese nearly resemble the warlike nations of Europe and Asia in their military operations. Ovalle's Relation of Chili; Church. Coll. iii. p. 71. Lozano, Hist. Parag. i. 144, 145.

Note L. p. 176.

Herrera gives a remarkable proof of this. In Yucatan, the men are so solicitous about their dress, that they carry about with them mirrors, probably made of stone, like those of the Mexicans, Dec. iv. lib. iii. c. 8. in which they delight to view themselves;

but the women never use them, Dec. iv. lib. x. c. 3. He takes notice, that among the fierce tribe of the *Panches*, in the New Kingdom of Granada, none but distinguished warriors were permitted either to pierce their lips and to wear green stones in them, or to adorn their heads with plumes of feathers, Dec. vii. lib. ix. c. 4. In some provinces of Peru, though that empire had made considerable progress in civilization, the state of women was little improved. All the toil of cultivation and domestic work was devolved upon them, and they were not permitted to wear bracelets, or other ornaments, with which the men were fond of decking themselves. Zarate, Hist. de Peru, i. p. 15, 16.

Note LI. p. 176.

I have ventured to call this mode of anointing and painting their bodies, the *dress* of the Americans. This is agreeable to their own idiom. As they never stir abroad if they are not completely anointed, they excuse themselves when in this situation, by saying, that they cannot appear because they are naked. Gumilla, Hist. de l'Orenoque, i. 191.

Note LII. p. 178.

Some tribes in the province of Cinaloa, on the Gulf of California, seem to be among the rudest people of America united in the social state. They neither cultivate nor sow; they have no houses in which they reside. Those in the inland country subsist by hunt-

ing; those on the sea-coast chiefly by fishing. Both depend upon the spontaneous productions of the earth, fruits, plants, and roots of various kinds. In the rainy season, as they have no habitations to afford them shelter, they gather bundles of reeds, or strong grass, and binding them together at one end, they open them at the other, and fitting them to their heads, they are covered as with a large cap, which like a pent-house throws off the rain, and will keep them dry for several hours. During the warm season, they form a shed with the branches of trees, which protects them from the sultry rays of the sun. When exposed to cold, they make large fires, round which they sleep in the open air. Historia de los Triumphos de Nuestra Santa Fè entre Gentes las mas barbaras, &c. por P. And. Perez de Ribas, p. 7, &c.

Note LIII. p. 179.

These houses resemble barns. "We have measured some which were a hundred and fifty paces long, and twenty paces broad. Above a hundred persons resided in some of them;" Wilson's Account of Guiana; Purch. Pilgr. vol. iv. p. 1263. Ibid. 1291. "The Indian houses," says Mr Barrere, "have a most wretched appearance, and are a striking image of the rudeness of early times. Their huts are commonly built on some rising ground, or on the banks of a river, huddled sometimes together, sometimes straggling, and always without any order. Their aspect is melancholy and disagreeable. One sees nothing but what is hideous and savage. The uncultivated fields have no gaiety. The silence which reigns

there, unless when interrupted by the disagreeable notes of birds, or cries of wild beasts, is extremely dismal;" Relat. de la France Equin. p. 146.

Note LIV. p. 182.

Some tribes in South America can send their arrows to a great distance, and with considerable force, without the aid of the bow. They make use of a hollow reed, about nine feet long, and an inch thick, which is called a *Sarbacane*. In it they lodge a small arrow, with some unspun cotton wound about its great end; this confines the air, so that they can blow it with astonishing rapidity, and a sure aim, to the distance of above a hundred paces. These small arrows are always poisoned. Fermin, Descr. de Surin. i. 55. Bancroft's Hist. of Guiana, p. 281, &c. The Sarbacane is much used in some parts of the East-Indies.

Note LV. p. 182.

I might produce many instances of this, but shall satisfy myself with one, taken from the Esquimaux. "Their greatest ingenuity (says Mr Ellis) is shown in the structure of their bows, made commonly of three pieces of wood, each making part of the same arch, very nicely and exactly joined together. They are commonly of fir or larch; and as this wants strength and elasticity, they supply both by bracing the back of the bow with a kind of thread, or line, made of the sinews of their deer, and the bow-string of the same materials. To make them draw more stiffly, they dip

them into water, which causes both the back of the bow and the string to contract, and consequently gives it the greater force; and as they practise from their youth, they shoot with very great dexterity;" Voyage to Hudson's Bay, p. 138.

Note LVI. p. 183.

Necessity is the great prompter and guide of mankind in their inventions. There is, however, such inequality in some parts of their progress, and some nations get so far the start of others in circumstances nearly similar, that we must ascribe this to some events in their story, or to some peculiarity in their situation, with which we are unacquainted. The people in the island of Otaheite, lately discovered in the South Sea, far excel most of the Americans in the knowledge and practice of the arts of ingenuity, and yet they had not invented any method of boiling water; and having no vessel that would bear the fire, they had no more idea that water could be made hot, than that it could be made solid. Voyages by Hawkesworth, i. 466. 484.

Note LVII. p. 188.

One of these boats, which could carry nine men, weighed only sixty pounds. Gosnal, Relat. des Voy. à la Virgin.; Rec. de Voy. au Nord, tom. v. p. 403.

Note LVIII. p. 156.

A remarkable proof of this is produced by Ulloa. In weaving hammocks, coverlets, and other coarse cloths, which they are accustomed to manufacture, their industry has discovered no more expeditious method than to take up thread after thread, and after counting and sorting them each time, to pass the woof between them; so that in finishing a small piece of those stuffs, they frequently spend more than two years. Voyage, i. 336. Bancroft gives the same description of the Indians of Guiana, p. 255. According to Adair, the ingenuity and despatch of the North American Indians are not greater, p. 422. From one of the engravings of the Mexican paintings in Purchas, vol. iii. p. 1106. I think it probable that the people of Mexico were unacquainted with any better or more expeditious mode of weaving. A loom was an invention beyond the ingenuity of the most improved Americans. In all their works they advance so slowly, that one of their artists is two months at a tobacco-pipe with his knife before he finishes it. Adair, p. 423.

Note LIX. p. 188.

The article of religion in P. Lafitau's Mœurs des Sauvages, extends to 347 tedious pages in quarto.

Note LX. p. 191.

I have referred the reader to several of the authors who describe the most uncivilized nations in America. Their testimony is uniform. That of P. Ribas concerning the people of Cinaloa, coincides with the rest. "I was extremely attentive (says he), during the years I resided among them, to ascertain whether they were to be considered as idolaters; and it may be affirmed with the most perfect exactness, that though among some of them there may be traces of idolatry, yet others have not the least knowledge of God, or even of any false deity, nor pay any formal adoration to the Supreme Being who exercises dominion over the world; nor have they any conception of the providence of a Creator or Governor, from whom they expect in the next life the reward of their good, or the punishment of their evil deeds. Neither do they publicly join in any act of divine worship;" Ribas, Triumphos, &c. p. 16.

Note LXI. p. 192.

The people of Brasil were so much affrighted by thunder, which is frequent and awful in their country, as well as in other parts of the torrid zone, that it was not only the object of religious reverence, but the most expressive name in their language for the Deity was *Toupan*, the same by which they distinguished thunder. Piso de Medec. Brasil. p. 8. Nieuhoff; Church. Coll. ii. p. 132.

Note LXII. p. 201.

By the account which M. Dumont, an eye-witness, gives of the funeral of the great chief of the Natchez, it appears, that the feelings of the persons who suffered on that occasion were very different. Some solicited the honour with eagerness; others laboured to avoid their doom, and several saved their lives by flying to the woods. As the Indian Brahmins give an intoxicating draught to the women who are to be burnt together with the bodies of their husbands, which renders them insensible of their approaching fate, the Natchez obliged their victims to swallow several large pills of tobacco, which produce a similar effect. Mem. de Louis. i. 227.

Note LXIII. p. 210.

On some occasions, particularly in dances instituted for the recovery of persons who are indisposed, they are extremely licentious and indecent. De la Potherie Hist. &c. ii. p. 42. Charlev. N. Fr. iii. p. 319. But the nature of their dances is commonly such as I have described.

Note LXIV. p. 212.

The *Othomacoas*, a tribe seated on the banks of the Orinoco, employ for the same purpose a composition which they call *Yupa*. It is formed of the seeds of an unknown plant reduced to powder, and certain shells

burnt and pulverized. The effects of this, when drawn up into the nostrils, are so violent, that they resemble madness rather than intoxication. Gumilla, i. 286.

Note LXV. p. 216.

Though this observation holds true among the greater part of the southern tribes, there are some in which the intemperance of the women is as excessive as that of the men. Bancroft's Nat. Hist. of Guiana, p. 275.

Note LXVI. p. 222.

Even in the most intelligent writers concerning the manners of the Americans, one meets with inconsistent and inexplicable circumstances. The Jesuit Charlevoix, who, in consequence of the controversy between his order and that of the Franciscans, with respect to the talents and abilities of the North Americans, is disposed to represent their intellectual as well as moral qualities in the most favourable light, asserts, that they are engaged in continual negociations with their neighbours, and conduct these with the most refined address. At the same time he adds, "that it behoves their envoys or plenipotentiaries to exert their abilities and eloquence; for if the terms which they offer are not accepted of, they had need to stand on their guard. It frequently happens, that a blow with a hatchet is the only return given to their propositions. The envoy is not out of danger, even if he is so fortunate as to avoid the stroke; he may expect to be pur-

sued, and if taken, to be burnt;" Hist. N. Fr. iii. 251. What occurs, vol. ii. p. 294. concerning the manner in which the Tlascalans treated the ambassadors from Zempoalla, corresponds with the fact related by Charlevoix. Men capable of such acts of violence, seem to be unacquainted with the first principles upon which the intercourse between nations is founded; and instead of the perpetual negociations which Charlevoix mentions, it seems almost impossible that there should be any correspondence whatever among them.

Note LXVII. p. 225.

It is a remark of Tacitus concerning the Germans, "Gaudent muneribus, sed nec data imputant, nec acceptis obligantur;" C. 21. An author who had a good opportunity of observing the principle which leads savages neither to express gratitude for favours which they had received, nor to expect any return for such as they bestowed, thus explains their ideas: "If, say they, you give me this, it is because you have no need of it yourself; and as for me, I never part with that which I think necessary to me." Memoire sur les Galibis; Hist. des Plantes de la Guiane Françoise par M. Aublet, tom. ii. p. 110.

Note LXVIII. p. 241.

And. Bernaldes, the contemporary and friend of Columbus, has preserved some circumstances concerning the bravery of the Caribbees, which are not mentioned by Don Ferdinand Columbus, or the other

historians of that period, whose works have been published. A Caribbean canoe, with four men, two women, and a boy, fell in unexpectedly with the fleet of Columbus in his second voyage, as it was steering through their islands. At first they were struck almost stupid with astonishment at such a strange spectacle, and hardly moved from the spot for above an hour. A Spanish bark, with twenty-five men, advanced towards them, and the fleet gradually surrounded them, so as to cut off their communication with the shore. "When they saw that it was impossible to escape (says the historian), they seized their arms with undaunted resolution, and began the attack. I use the expression, *with undaunted resolution*, for they were few, and beheld a vast number ready to assault them. They wounded several of the Spaniards, although they had targets, as well as other defensive armour; and even after their canoe was overset, it was with no little difficulty and danger that part of them were taken, as they continued to defend themselves, and to use their bows with great dexterity while swimming in the sea." Hist. de D. Fern. y Ysab. MSS. c. 119.

Note LXIX. p. 241.

A PROBABLE conjecture may be formed with respect to the cause of the distinction in character between the Caribbees and the inhabitants of the larger islands. The former appear manifestly to be a separate race. Their language is totally different from that of their neighbours in the large islands. They themselves have a tradition, that their ancestors came originally from some part of the continent, and having conquered and

exterminated the ancient inhabitants, took possession of their lands, and of their women. Rochefort, 384. Tertre, 360. Hence they call themselves *Banarees*, which signifies, a man come from beyond sea. Labat. vi. 131. Accordingly, the Caribbees still use two distinct languages, one peculiar to the men, and the other to the women. Tertre, 361. The language of the men has nothing common with that spoken in the large islands. The dialect of the women considerably resembles it. Labat. 129. This strongly confirms the tradition which I have mentioned. The Caribbees themselves imagine, that they were a colony from the *Galibis*, a powerful nation of Guiana, in South America. Tertre, 361. Rochefort, 348. But as their fierce manners approach nearer to those of the people in the northern continent, than to those of the natives of South America; and as their language has likewise some affinity to that spoken in Florida, their origin should be deduced rather from the former than from the latter. Labat. 128, &c. Herrera, dec. i. lib. ix. c. 4. In their wars, they still observe their ancient practice of destroying all the males, and preserving the women either for servitude or for breeding.

Note LXX. p. 243.

Our knowledge of the events which happened in the conquest of New Spain, is derived from sources of information more original and authentic than that of any transaction in the history of America. The letters of Cortes to the Emperor Charles V. are an historical monument, not only first in order of time, but of the greatest authenticity and value. As Cortes early as-

sumed a command independent of Velasquez, it became necessary to convey such an account of his operations to Madrid, as might procure him the approbation of his sovereign.

THE first of his despatches has never been made public. It was sent from Vera Cruz, July 16. 1519. As I imagined that it might not reach the Emperor until he arrived in Germany, for which he set out early in the year 1520 in order to receive the Imperial crown, I made diligent search for a copy of this despatch, both in Spain and in Germany, but without success. This, however, is of less consequence, as it could not contain any thing very material, being written so soon after Cortes arrived in New Spain. But, in searching for the letter from Cortes, a copy of one from the colony of Vera Cruz to the Emperor has been discovered in the Imperial library at Vienna. Of this I have given some account in its proper place, p. 285. of this volume. The second despatch, dated October 30. 1520, was published at Seville, A. D. 1522, and the third and fourth soon after they were received. A Latin translation of them appeared in Germany, A. D. 1532. Ramusio soon after made them more generally known, by inserting them in his valuable collection. They contain a regular and minute history of the expedition, with many curious particulars concerning the policy and manners of the Mexicans. The work does honour to Cortes; the style is simple and perspicuous; but as it was manifestly his interest to represent his own actions in the fairest light, his victories are probably exaggerated, his losses diminished, and his acts of rigour and violence softened.

THE next in order is the Cronica de la Nueva Espagna, by Francisco Lopez de Gomara, published A. D. 1554. Gomara's historical merit is considerable. His mode of narration is clear, flowing, always agreeable, and sometimes elegant. But he is frequently inaccurate and credulous; and as he was the domestic chaplain of Cortes after his return from New Spain, and probably composed his work at his desire, it is manifest that he labours to magnify the merit of his hero, and to conceal or extenuate such transactions as were unfavourable to his character. Of this Herrera accuses him in one instance, Dec. 2. lib. iii. c. 2. and it is not once only that this is conspicuous. He writes, however, with so much freedom concerning several measures of the Spanish court, that the copies both of his Historia de las Indias, and of his Cronica, were called in by decree of the Council of the Indies, and they were long considered as prohibited books in Spain; it is only of late that license to print them has been granted. Pinelo, Biblioth. 589.

THE Chronicle of Gomara induced Bernal Diaz del Castillo to compose his Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva Espagna. He had been an adventurer in each of the expeditions to New Spain, and was the companion of Cortes in all his battles and perils. When he found that neither he himself, nor many of his fellow-soldiers, were once mentioned by Gomara, but that the fame of all their exploits was ascribed to Cortes, the gallant veteran laid hold of his pen with indignation, and composed his true history. It contains a prolix, minute, confused narrative of all Cortes's operations, in such a rude vulgar style as might be expected from an illiterate soldier. But as

he relates transactions of which he was witness, and in which he performed a considerable part, his account bears all the marks of authenticity, and is accompanied with such a pleasant *naïveté*, with such interesting details, with such amusing vanity, and yet so pardonable in an old soldier who had been (as he boasts) in a hundred and nineteen battles, as renders his book one of the most singular that is to be found in any language.

Pet. Martyr ab Angleria, in a treatise De Insulis nuper inventis, added to his Decades de Rebus Oceanicis et Novo Orbe, gives some account of Cortes's expedition. But he proceeds no farther than to relate what happened after his first landing. This work, which is brief and slight, seems to contain the information transmitted by Cortes in his first despatches, embellished with several particulars communicated to the author by the officers who brought the letters from Cortes.

But the book to which the greater part of modern historians have had recourse for information concerning the conquest of New Spain, is Historia de la Conquista de Mexico, por D. Antonio de Solis, first published A. D. 1684. I know no author in any language whose literary fame has risen so far beyond his real merit. De Solis is reckoned by his countrymen one of the purest writers in the Castilian tongue; and if a foreigner may venture to give his opinion concerning a matter of which Spaniards alone are qualified to judge, he is entitled to that praise. But though his language be correct, his taste in composition is far from being just. His periods are so much laboured

as to be often stiff, and sometimes tumid; the figures which he employs by way of ornament are frequently trite or improper, and his observations superficial. These blemishes, however, might easily be overlooked, if he were not defective with respect to all the great qualities of an historian. Destitute of that patient industry in research which conducts to the knowledge of truth; a stranger to that impartiality which weighs evidence with cool attention; and ever eager to establish his favourite system of exalting the character of Cortes into that of a perfect hero, exempt from error, and adorned with every virtue; he is less solicitous to discover what was true than to relate what might appear splendid. When he attempts any critical discussion, his reasonings are fallacious, and founded upon an imperfect view of facts. Though he sometimes quotes the *despatches* of Cortes, he seems not to have consulted them; and though he sets out with some censure on Gomara, he frequently prefers his authority, the most doubtful of any, to that of the other contemporary historians.

But of all the Spanish writers, Herrera furnishes the fullest and most accurate information concerning the conquest of Mexico, as well as every other transaction of America. The industry and attention with which he consulted not only the books, but the original papers and public records, which tended to throw any light upon the subject of his inquiries, were so great, and he usually judges of the evidence before him with so much impartiality and candour, that his Decads may be ranked among the most judicious and useful historical collections. If, by attempting to relate the various occurrences in the New World in a

strict chronological order, the arrangement of events in his work had not been rendered so perplexed, disconnected, and obscure, that it is an unpleasant task to collect from different parts of his book, and piece together the detached shreds of a story, he might justly have been ranked among the most eminent historians of his country. He gives an account of the materials from which he composed his work, Decad. 6. lib. iii. c. 19.

NOTE LXXI. p. 246.

CORTES purposed to have gone in the train of Ovando when he set out for his government in the year 1502, but was detained by an accident. As he was attempting in a dark night to scramble up to the window of a lady's bed-chamber, with whom he carried on an intrigue, an old wall, on the top of which he had mounted, gave way, and he was so much bruised by the fall as to be unfit for the voyage. Gomara, Cronica de la Nueva Espagna, cap. 1.

NOTE LXXII. p. 249.

CORTES had two thousand pesos in the hands of Andrew Duero, and he borrowed four thousand. These sums are about equal in value to fifteen hundred pounds sterling; but as the price of every thing was extremely high in America, they made but a scanty stock when applied towards the equipment of a military expedition. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iii. c. 2. B. Diaz, c. 20.

Note LXXIII. p. 254.

The names of those gallant officers, which will often occur in the subsequent story, were Juan Velasquez de Leon, Alonso Hernandez Portocarrero, Francisco de Montejo, Christoval de Olid, Juan de Escalante, Francisco de Morla, Pedro de Alvarado, Francisco de Salceda, Juan de Escobar, Gines de Nortes. Cortes himself commanded the Capitana, or Admiral. Francisco de Orozco, an officer formed in the wars of Italy, had the command of the artillery. The experienced Alaminos acted as chief pilot.

Note LXXIV. p. 257.

In those different conflicts, the Spaniards lost only two men, but had a considerable number wounded. Though there be no occasion for recourse to any supernatural cause to account either for the greatness of their victories or the smallness of their loss, the Spanish historians fail not to ascribe both to the patronage of St Jago, the tutelar saint of their country, who, as they relate, fought at the head of their countrymen, and by his prowess gave a turn to the fate of the battle. Gomara is the first who mentions this apparition of St James. It is amusing to observe the embarrassment of B. Diaz del Castillo, occasioned by the struggle between his superstition and his veracity. The former disposed him to believe this miracle, the latter restrained him from attesting it. "I acknowledge," says he, "that all our exploits and victories are owing to our Lord Jesus Christ, and that in this

battle there was such a number of Indians to every one of us, that if each had thrown a handful of earth they might have buried us, if by the great mercy of God we had not been protected. It may be that the person whom Gomara mentions as having appeared on a mottled grey horse, was the glorious apostle Signor San Jago or Signor San Pedro, and that I, as being a sinner, was not worthy to see him. This I know, that I saw Francisco de Morla on such a horse, but, as an unworthy transgressor, did not deserve to see any of the holy apostles. It may have been the will of God that it was so as Gomara relates, but until I read his Chronicle I never heard among any of the conquerors that such a thing had happened." Cap. 34.

Note LXXV. p. 264.

Several Spanish historians relate this occurrence in such terms as if they wished it should be believed, that the Indians, loaded with the presents, had carried them from the capital in the same short space of time that the couriers performed that journey. This is incredible, and Gomara mentions a circumstance which shows that nothing extraordinary happened on this occasion. This rich present had been prepared for Grijalva, when he touched at the same place some months before, and was now ready to be delivered, as soon as Montezuma sent orders for that purpose. Gomara, Cron. c. xxvii. p. 28.

According to B. Diaz del Castillo, the value of the silver plate representing the moon, was alone above

twenty thousand pesos, about five thousand pounds sterling.

Note LXXVI. p. 271.

This private traffic was directly contrary to the instructions of Velasquez, who enjoined, that whatever was acquired by trade should be thrown into the common stock. But it appears, that the soldiers had each a private assortment of toys, and other goods proper for the Indian trade, and Cortes gained their favour by encouraging this under-hand barter. B. Diaz, c. 41.

Note LXXVII. p. 287.

Gomara has published a catalogue of the various articles of which this present consisted. Cron. c. 49. P. Martyr ab Angleria, who saw them after they were brought to Spain, and who seems to have examined them with great attention, gives a description of each, which is curious, as it conveys some idea of the progress which the Mexicans had made in several arts of elegance. De Insulis nuper inventis, p. 354, &c.

Note LXXVIII. p. 295.

There is no circumstance in the history of the conquest of America which is more questionable, than the account of the numerous armies brought into the

field against the Spaniards. As the war with the republic of Tlascala, though of short duration, was one of the most considerable which the Spaniards waged in America, the account given of the Tlascalan armies merits some attention. The only authentic information concerning this, is derived from three authors. Cortes, in his second despatch to the Emperor, dated at Segura de la Frontera, October 30. 1520, thus estimates the number of their troops: In the first battle 6000; in the second battle 100,000; in the third battle 150,000. Relat. ap. Ramus. iii. 228. Bernal Diaz del Castillo, who was an eye-witness, and engaged in all the actions of this war, thus reckons their numbers: in the first battle 3000, p. 43.; in the second battle 6000, ibid.; in the third battle 50,000, p. 45. Gomara, who was Cortes's chaplain after his return to Spain, and published his *Cronica* in 1552, follows the computation of Cortes, except in the second battle, where he reckons the Tlascalans at 80,000, p. 49. It was manifestly the interest of Cortes to magnify his own dangers and exploits. For it was only by the merit of extraordinary services, that he could hope to atone for his irregular conduct in assuming an independent command. B. Diaz, though abundantly disposed to place his own prowess, and that of his fellow-conquerors, in the most advantageous point of light, had not the same temptation to exaggerate; and it is probable that his account of the numbers approaches nearer to the truth. The assembling of an army of 150,000 men requires many previous arrangements, and such provisions for their subsistence as seems to be beyond the foresight of Americans. The degree of cultivation in Tlascala does not seem to have been so great, as to have furnished such a vast army with

provisions. Though this province was so much better cultivated than other regions of New Spain, that it was called *the country of bread*, yet the Spaniards in their march suffered such want, that they were obliged to subsist upon *Tunas*, a species of fruit which grows wild in the fields. Herrera, dec. ii. lib. vi. c. 5. p. 182.

Note LXXIX. p. 301.

These unhappy victims are said to be persons of distinction. It seems improbable that so great a number as fifty should be employed as spies. So many prisoners had been taken and dismissed, and the Tlascalans had sent so many messages to the Spanish quarters, that there appears to be no reason for hazarding the lives of so many considerable people, in order to procure information about the position and state of their camp. The barbarous manner in which Cortes treated a people unacquainted with the laws of war established among polished nations, appears so shocking to the later Spanish writers, that they diminish the number of those whom he punished so cruelly. Herrera says, that he cut off the hands of seven, and the thumbs of some more; Dec. ii. lib. ii. c. 8. De Solis relates, that the hands of fourteen or fifteen were cut off, and the thumbs of all the rest; Lib. ii. c. 20. But Cortes himself, Relat. p. 228. b. and after him Gomara, c. 48. affirm, that the hands of all the fifty were cut off.

Note LXXX. p. 304.

The horses were objects of the greatest astonishment to all the people of New Spain. At first they imagined the horse and his rider, like the Centaurs of the ancients, to be some monstrous animal of a terrible form; and supposing that their food was the same as that of men, brought flesh and bread to nourish them. Even after they discovered their mistake, they believed the horses devoured men in battle, and when they neighed, thought that they were demanding their prey. It was not the interest of the Spaniards to undeceive them. Herrera, dec. ii. lib. vi. c. 11.

Note LXXXI. p. 310.

According to Bart. de las Casas, there was no reason for this massacre, and it was an act of wanton cruelty, perpetrated merely to strike terror into the people of New Spain. Relac. de la Destruyc. p. 17. &c. But the zeal of Las Casas often leads him to exaggerate. In opposition to him, Bern. Diaz, c. 83. asserts, that the first missionaries sent into New Spain by the Emperor made a judicial inquiry into this transaction; and having examined the priests and elders of Cholula, found that there was a real conspiracy to cut off the Spaniards, and that the account given by Cortes was exactly true. As it was the object of Cortes at that time, and manifestly his interest, to gain the good-will of Montezuma, it is improbable that he should have taken a step which tended so visibly to alienate him from the Spaniards, if he had not believed it to be ne-

cessary for his own preservation. At the same time, the Spaniards who served in America had such contempt for the natives, and thought them so little entitled to the common rights of men, that Cortes might hold the Cholulans to be guilty upon slight and imperfect evidence. The severity of the punishment was certainly excessive and atrocious.

Note LXXXII. p. 312.

This description is taken almost literally from Bernal Diaz del Castillo, who was so unacquainted with the art of composition, as to be incapable of embellishing his narrative. He relates in a simple and rude style what passed in his own mind, and that of his fellow-soldiers, on that occasion; "and let it not be thought strange," says he, "that I should write in this manner of what then happened; for it ought to be considered, that it is one thing to relate, another to have beheld things that were never before seen, or heard, or spoken of among men." Cap. 86. p. 64. b.

Note LXXXIII. p. 327.

B. Diaz del Castillo gives us some idea of the fatigue and hardships they underwent in performing this, and other parts of duty. During the nine months that they remained in Mexico, every man, without any distinction between officers and soldiers, slept on his arms in his quilted jacket and gorget. They lay on mats, or straw spread on the floor, and each was obliged to hold himself as alert as if he had been on guard. "This," adds

he, "became so habitual to me, that even now, in my advanced age, I always sleep in my clothes, and never in any bed. When I visit my *Encomienda*, I reckon it suitable to my rank to have a bed carried along with my other baggage, but I never go into it; but, according to custom, I lie in my clothes, and walk frequently during the night into the open air to view the stars, as I was wont when in service." Cap. 108.

Note LXXXIV. p. 331.

Cortes himself, in his second despatch to the Emperor, does not explain the motives which induced him either to condemn Qualpopoca to the flames, or to put Montezuma in irons. Ramus. iii. 286. B. Diaz is silent with respect to his reasons for the former; and the only cause he assigns for the latter was, that he might meet with no interruption in executing the sentence pronounced against Qualpopoca; c. xcv. p. 75. But as Montezuma was his prisoner, and absolutely in his power, he had no reason to dread him; and the insult offered to that monarch could have no effect but to irritate him unnecessarily. Gomara supposes that Cortes had no other object than to occupy Montezuma with his own distress and sufferings, that he might give less attention to what befel Qualpopoca; Cron. c. 89. Herrera adopts the same opinion; Dec. ii. lib. viii. c. 9. But it seems an odd expedient, in order to make a person bear one injury, to load him with another that is greater. De Solis imagines, that Cortes had nothing else in view than to intimidate Montezuma, so that he might make no attempt to rescue the victims from their fate; but the spirit of that monarch was so submissive,

and he had so tamely given up the prisoners to the disposal of Cortes, that he had no cause to apprehend any opposition from him. If the explanation which I have attempted to give of Cortes's proceedings on this occasion be not admitted, it appears to me, that they must be reckoned among the wanton and barbarous acts of oppression which occur too often in the history of the conquest of America.

NOTE LXXXV. p. 335.

DE SOLIS asserts, lib. iv. c. 3. that the proposition of doing homage to the King of Spain came from Montezuma himself, and was made in order to induce the Spaniards to depart out of his dominions. He describes his conduct on this occasion, as if it had been founded upon a scheme of profound policy, and executed with such refined address as to deceive Cortes himself. But there is no hint or circumstance in the contemporary historians, Cortes, Diaz, or Gomara, to justify this theory. Montezuma, on other occasions, discovered no such extent of art and abilities. The anguish which he felt in performing this humbling ceremony is natural, if we suppose it to have been involuntary. But, according to the theory of De Solis, which supposes that Montezuma was executing what he himself had proposed, to have assumed an appearance of sorrow would have been preposterous, and inconsistent with his own design of deceiving the Spaniards.

Note LXXXVI. p. 339.

In several of the provinces, the Spaniards, with all their industry and influence, could collect no gold. In others, they procured only a few trinkets of small value. Montezuma assured Cortes, that the present which he offered to the King of Castile, after doing homage, consisted of all the treasure amassed by his father; and told him that he had already distributed the rest of his gold and jewels among the Spaniards. B. Diaz, c. 104. Gomara relates, that all the silver collected amounted to 500 marks. Cron. c. 93. This agrees with the account given by Cortes, that the royal fifth of silver was 100 marks. Relat. 239. B. So that the sum total of silver was only 4000 ounces, at the rate of eight ounces a mark, which demonstrates the proportion of silver to gold to have been exceedingly small.

Note LXXXVII. p. 340.

De Solis, lib. iv. c. 1. calls in question the truth of this transaction, from no better reason than that it was inconsistent with that prudence which distinguishes the character of Cortes. But he ought to have recollected the impetuosity of his zeal at Tlascala, which was no less imprudent. He asserts, that the evidence for it rests upon the testimony of B. Diaz del Castillo, of Gomara, and of Herrera. They all concur, indeed, in mentioning this inconsiderate step which Cortes took; and they had good reason to do so, for Cortes himself relates this exploit in his second despatch to the Emperor, and seems to glory in it. Cort. Relat.

Ramus. iii. 140. D. This is one instance, among many, of De Solis's having consulted with little attention the letters of Cortes to Charles V., from which the most authentic information with respect to his operations must be derived.

NOTE LXXXVIII. p. 345.

HERRERA and De Solis suppose that Velasquez was encouraged to equip this armament against Cortes by the accounts which he received from Spain concerning the reception of the agents sent by the colony of Vera Cruz, and the warmth with which Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos, had espoused his interest, and condemned the proceedings of Cortes. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ix. c. 18. De Solis, lib. iv. c. 5. But the chronological order of events refutes this supposition. Portocarrero and Montejo sailed from Vera Cruz, July 26. 1519. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 4. They landed at St Lucar in October, according to Herrera, Ibid. But P. Martyr, who attended the court at that time, and communicated every occurrence of moment to his correspondents day by day, mentions the arrival of these agents for the first time in December, and speaks of it as a recent event. Epist. 650. All the historians agree, that the agents of Cortes had their first audience of the Emperor at Tordesillas, when he went to that town to visit his mother in his way to St Jago de Compostella. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. v. c. 4. De Solis, lib. iv. c. 5. But the Emperor set out from Valladolid for Tordesillas on the 11th of March 1520; and P. Martyr mentions his having seen at that time the presents made to Charles, Epist. 665. The armament under

Narvaez sailed from Cuba in April 1520. It is manifest then that Velasquez could not receive any account of what passed in this interview at Tordesillas, previous to his hostile preparations against Cortes. His real motives seem to be those which I have mentioned. The patent appointing him *Adelantado* of New Spain, with such extensive powers, bears date November 18. 1519. Herrera, dec. 2. lib. iii. c. 11. He might receive it about the beginning of January. Gomara takes notice, that as soon as this patent was delivered to him, he began to equip a fleet and levy forces. Cron. c. 96.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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